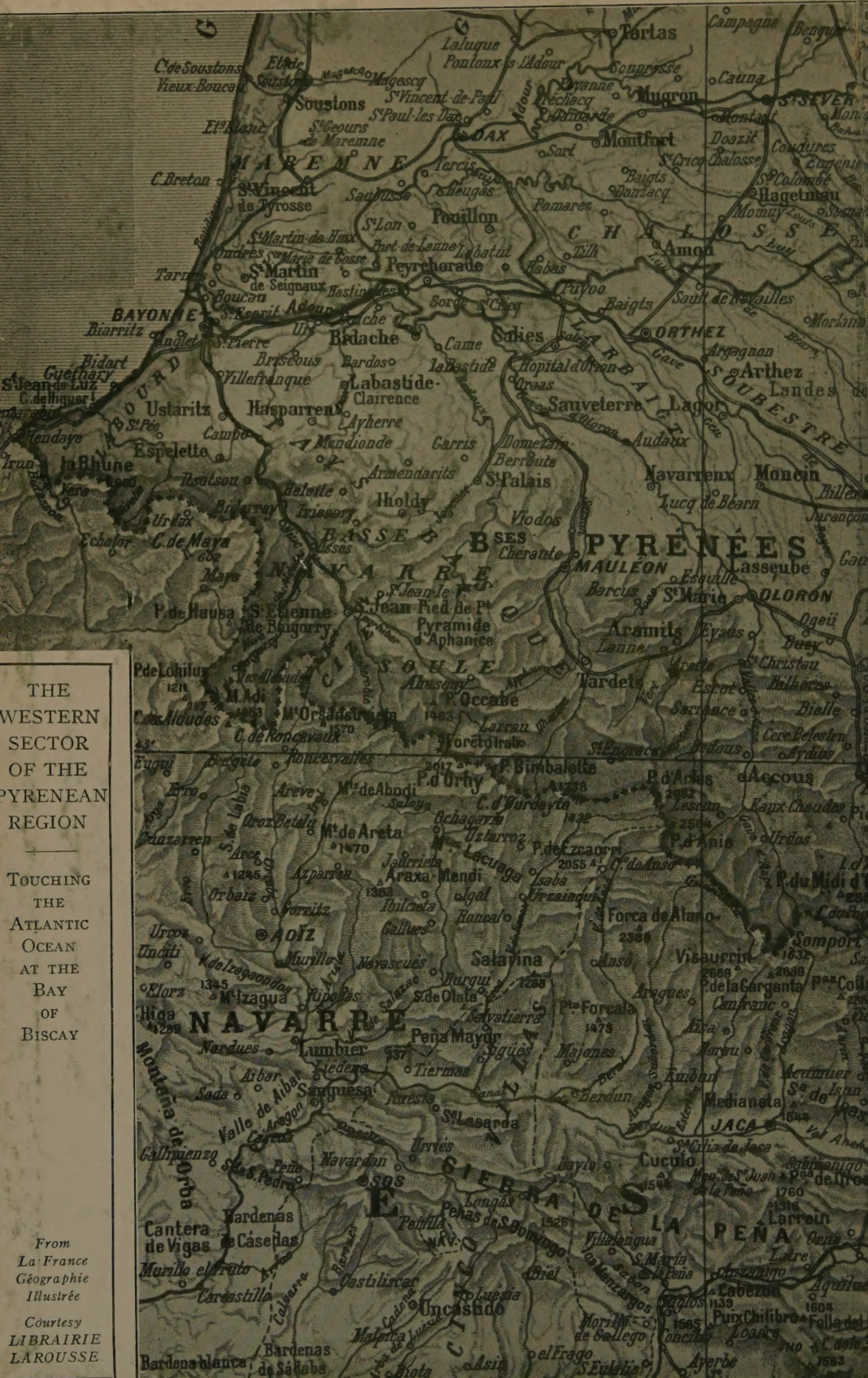
ALONG THE PYRENEES

PAUL WILSTACH



THE WESTERN SECTOR OF THE PYRENEAN REGION

TOUCHING THE ATLANTIC OCEAN AT THE BAY OF BISCAY

From La France Géographie Illustrée

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Valence
Eauze
Fleurance
Nogaro
Vic-Fezensac
GERS
Jegun
Aignan
ARMAGNAC
Mauvezin
Cologne
AUCH
Plaisance
Castelnau
Gimont
Montesquiou
Marciac
MIRANDE
Saramon
Samatan
LOMBEZ
Lembeye
Vic-de-Bigorre
Miélan
Masseube
Montaner
Rabastens-de-Bigorre
PARDIAC
Trie
Castelnau-Magnoac
Boulogne
Fousseret
Tarbes
Plateau de Calan
Aurignac
Tournay
MAGNOAC
Lannemezan
Ossun
St-Pé
St-Martory
Lourdes
BAGNÈRES-DE-BIGORRE
Montréjeau
St-Gaudens
Labarthe
St-Laurent
Barbazan
HTES PYRENEES
Aspet
Arreau
Bagnères-de-Luchon
Castillon
Luz
Borderes
Vielle Aure
Maladeta
Posets
Mt Perdu
Mt Maudits
Castanesa
Gallinero
Turbon
Campanué
Montiberri
Monte Perdido

250

Anon. Chuskuae 1925.

ALONG THE PYRENEES

Courtesy LIBRAIRIE LAROUSSE *From La France: Géographie Illustrée*

The vast Cirque de Gavarnie

ALONG THE PYRENEES

BY

PAUL WILSTACH

AUTHOR OF

MOUNT VERNON, JEFFERSON AND MONTICELLO, ETC.

INDIANAPOLIS

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To

MY BROTHER

FRANK JENNERS WILSTACH

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ALONG THE PYRENEES

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CHAPTER I

The Gateway

THE GATEWAY OF THE PYRENEES—THE CASE FOR THE FRENCH SLOPES—HOW TO GET INTO THE MOUNTAINS—THE OLD LÉGIONNAIRE'S ELOQUENCE—TOULOUSE AS A PIVOT—AWAKENING IN THE MIDI METROPOLIS—THE HILL OF THE COLUMN—FIRST SIGHT OF THE GREAT WALL BETWEEN FRANCE AND SPAIN.

The Pyrenees!

The name rang as a song, and it had all the magnificence of the unknown.

One spring day in Paris opportunity and decision came hand in hand. The way was open to go and to know. Immediately there was an intensive drive for information, to correct in a fortnight the ignorance of a lifetime; a hurried accumulating of maps, guide-books, histories, the brochures of the numberless agencies interested, anything and everything available on the subject.

At first bewilderment and confusion. Then bits of information detached themselves from the mass. Names became places. Places took positions. The black lines of the railways and the blue lines of the rivers and the red lines of roads and paths disentangled themselves.

Altitudes expressed themselves. A sense of three dimensions gradually asserted itself. A boundary-line between the two great flanking national units threaded itself from peak to peak, from sea to sea.

These first steps into the land of prospective adventure, though taken within the secure radius of the library lamp, have an unimagined thrill. And what names; strangely familiar, as if they had always been known yet not quite remembered, and were vaguely detached from their anchorage of interest. Carcassonne, Perpignan, Mont Perdu, Pau! Cauterets, Ax-les-Thermes, Lourdes, Roncevaux! They tripped out with rhythm. They seemed to make poetry. They marched, sang, actually rhymed!

These first revelations from the maps and the guide-books were naturally only in regard to places and their names and situations, their relation to other places and their distances from them, and their accessibility from Paris. But somehow one feels ground under one's feet even with only a map under one's hand. So the information about situation and distance seemed solid. Along with it, however, grew up a mushroom of misinformation about hotels. Nothing else in travel is so little to be depended on as assurance as to the place where you are going to lay your head. The great gamble is where one will find a roof, whether the roof will be friendly enough to yield sunny comfort or cold court gloom. Of course there is no gamble about the price. That is whatever the great condescender who permits you to enter his portals

decides in his own mysterious way. So, with an effort at serene fatalism on that subject, I concentrated on the comforting dependable values of the maps.

It was almost immediately clear that the Pyrenees may be approached from the north by three main arteries of travel, one at the eastern extremity of the range, another at the western extremity and a third almost in the center. These three routes from the north approach from the water level of the Mediterranean on the east, from the water level of the Atlantic on the west, and from a point a little east of midway between the two great waters through the ancient city of Toulouse. For ages the only real highways between the north and the south, between the plains which are France and the peninsula which is Spain, have been at each end of the range where it dipped into the two seas. These highways have been forced on travelers by the barrier of mountain masses between. But by the same token that this granite wall between these marine extremes has stopped any but the adventurous, it has massed a considerable population on its northern slopes. These people find their contact with the world down the valleys along the routes of least resistance which converge at the great bend of the Garonne River where the Roman conquerors found "Tolosa" already a great capital and a great prize in the second century before the Christian era. So the first question was which port of entry to choose. Knowing nothing of any of them one seemed as good as another.

I had not gone far in collecting those folders, schedules, brochures, guide-books and other superficial literature and *réclame,* generally gratis over the counters of the tourist agents, and in digesting them, though the first stage is more truly that of indigesting them, when I sensed that my freedom of choice was being thwarted and the way was being laid for me. A little unintentionally, if not quite unwillingly, I was being carried off toward the Atlantic, over the well traveled road to Bordeaux and Biarritz, as if that were the door, the only practical or at least the only favored door into these mountains.

Much art is spent and much ink is spread to lure travelers into the Pyrenees from the west. The reason is doubtless that the Bordeaux and Bayonne route to Biarritz, San Sebastian, Madrid and all central and western Spain, which seeks the narrow littoral between the ocean and the hills, carries an enormous tourist traffic past this approach, and thus furnishes far and away the largest ready-made audience for Pyrenean publicity. The Railroad of the Midi, the essential because the only Pyrenean railroad system, edits its routes from west to east. The guide-books, whether of the pre-war régime made in Germany or the contemporary crop made in France, follow the same compass. It is thus that the unwary traveler, unless he is on his guard, subconsciously receives the impression that there is no other practical entrance to these mountains, no other route

through them except that which bases on the Atlantic and follows an easterly course to the Mediterranean.

Now as a practical matter of fact, all other considerations in favor of the opposite course aside, and there are many, the consequence of directing so much traffic in an easterly direction is that there is much less pressure on the means of transportation in the westerly direction, and hence there is in this way more room and better service. Go east and be crowded. Go west and be comfortable.

The Atlantic to Mediterranean réclame had worked its spell on me when one spring evening in Paris I made so bold as to admit that plan of seeing the Pyrenees to a small circle about a metal table on a well frequented street. With us was a wise and eloquent old *légionnaire* who had packed three swift priceless hours with facts, legends and descriptions of these mountains. That admission lost me all the character which my silence had secured. He announced with the assurance of an oracle:

"The Pyrenees, my friend, should be seen first neither from the ocean nor the sea. Let me beg of you to see them first from Toulouse—"

"But, from Toulouse even the foot-hills are—"

"Thirty miles away," he injected. "That's true. But remember three things. The view I speak of can only be had on a clear day. It may be seen only from the top of the Hill of the Column. Finally, it must be borne in mind that the peaks pile up abruptly behind the

shallow barrage of foot-hills. The frontier along the crests, where the altitude is nearly ten thousand feet, is less than fifty miles away.

"No, my friend, there is no place else so proper first to see these noble mountains, for Toulouse by every natural, that is to say every topographical reason, holds a key to every gateway to the Pyrenees. Not only do you get from afar your first glimpse of the snow-capped peaks, but here first you'll sense their nearness when the fresh winds blow up from the southern heights. Here first your ear will pick up the strange accents of Catalan and Basque, and your eye will rejoice in contrasts that will open a new world to any one who has not before fared along the Pyrenees."

His enthusiasm rose with his vision of his own southland, and his voice rose with his enthusiasm, and the burr of the Midi for a moment obscured his polished Parisian accent and caught the ears and focused on him the eyes of others at the near-by tables on the same terrace. It may as well be confessed that my enthusiasm matched his and with all convenient speed I was off to Toulouse to browse in that corner of France where, though the travelers are plentiful, herded tourists at least are few, and nature itself is fine and fierce.

The twelve hours' travel required to cover the scant four hundred and fifty miles directly south to the metropolis of the Pyrenees were swallowed in sleep. This same sleep, erasing as it does the graduated changes

from one climate to another, from one habit of life to another, from one accent of architecture, manners, dress and speech to another, provides the sharp significant contrasts which stamp character, whether of people or of places, with a vividness which otherwise may easily escape. To go to sleep in leaving Paris and to wake up in approaching Toulouse is, as it were, to bring the two cities side by side, to bring the north and the south of France elbow to elbow. One is surprised to find, with such apparent suddenness, instead of the flat valley of the Seine, a hilly country almost rugged; instead of a landscape whose few trees are yearly stripped by the charcoal-burners and whose lands seem to bear somewhat grudgingly, a southern opulence of forests and fields, wide flung branches heavy with foliage, fence corners packed with waste growth which decorates the stone-laid hedges it embraces; instead of dull gray farmhouses with black slate roofs, ample low houses with white walls and tinted tiles, the houses seem out of Spain direct. In the station the names on the posters were as often Spanish as French. Under the car window some one was singing at his work. Here was kinship with Italy, too. Magically, it was the south, the Midi.

Instead of a devouring curiosity about the city itself nothing else had a call equal to that of the hill which is called the Hill of the Column, from the top of which the mountains were to be seen. From the neighborhood of the station it is no great walk though the hill is high and

the rough cobbled road is uncompromisingly direct. It achieves the summit by the shortest possible route from the base, which is a straight line, with a disposition to be a bit perpendicular; but the way is made beautiful by gay villas and green and blooming gardens.

At the top the battle of Toulouse, in 1814, is commemorated by a curious brick column which gives the hill its name. This infrequently mentioned battle was one of the tragic futilities of history, difficult to realize in these days of electric communication, a blind needless sacrifice of eight thousand lives for and against Napoleon, ten days after the Emperor had abdicated. Near its base is the outlook recommended by the *légionnaire.*

Below is the city spreading to circling distances of green hills and valleys. Beyond, banked against the southern horizon, vaguely distinguishable from the clouds which come down and caress their summits, is the softened outline of the mountains, the Pyrenees themselves. It is a proper, respectful, almost awesome introduction to this great storied range which from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic stands an almost insurmountable barrier between the two countries whose political boundary runs along its crests. Here as far as the eye can see is France. Beyond the faint wavering line where earth and sky blend is Spain.

Standing there, and gazing at a reality that seemed almost a vision, it was interesting to recall the eloquence of the scholarly old boulevardier: "Those mountains

Tower and Church of St. Sernin at Toulouse

The Cathedral of St. Etienne at Toulouse

were the pathway of Hannibal on his magnificent never-to-be-completed circle, from Carthage to Spain and across the Alps through Italy. In their shadow he found cities where cities are to-day and the population of the valleys and plains scarcely less dense then than now. Indeed his adventure seems realer than the already half mythical troubadour-sung paladin Roland whose epic failure, in the wake of Charlemagne's retreat from Spain, is already obscured in a past of nearly a dozen centuries, yet ten hundred years nearer to us than the Carthagenian captain. There, indeed, were events and periods superb as the unchanging mountains, in comparison with whose inscrutable past they are, however, as but the ticking of seconds in time.

"In these hills are etched the stories, sometimes complete, sometimes only in part, of a host of other immortals, among whom stand out Louis IX, the canonized king of France; Gaston Phœbus, that Comte de Foix chronicled by Froissart; Henri IV, the White Plume of Navarre; Cardinal Richelieu; Condé the Great; Marguerite d'Angoulême's sprightly puppets who sat in the glade by the Aspe and spun the tales which are The Heptameron; Vauban, fortifier for the Grande Monarque; Bernadette whose Lourdes is now the most visited pilgrim shrine in Christendom; and, nearer still, the Maréchals Joffre and Foch.

"Its mineral springs, which bubble and boil from every valley of the range, were comparatively as well

known to the health-seeking Romans as they are to the contemporary world. Though these southern mountains know better than any others how to be friendly and green and fruitful, yet their scenery can be as wild and terrible as the seeker of the picturesque can ask, and the engineering that has harnessed the hills, and made them approachable and to give up in electricity what formerly was wasted in water, is among the modern wonders of the world." The scene, and such memories, commanded the respectful salute of silence.

CHAPTER II

The Range at a Glance

THE KIT OF TRAVEL INFORMATION—BUILDING A BACKGROUND —THE LAY OF THE PYRENEES—THE CRESTS—THE VALLEYS—SUN-BAKED SPANISH SLOPES AND GREEN FRENCH SLOPES—THE WATERS OF THE RANGE—ROADS AND ROUTES—TOWNS AND VILLAGES—THUMBNAIL HISTORY.

Standing on the hill above Toulouse, at last in the presence of the mountains, it was a little humiliating, however, to realize that the distant hazy range was not more indefinite than my knowledge of it. A wave of curiosity swept over me to which my stock of information was at the time entirely inadequate. Questions sprang to my lips and died there, for no one was near who could answer them. No doubt we all read a great deal, and it is pleasant and informing reading, but the impression it leaves is too apt to be somehow fleeting. That was my predicament in the presence of the Pyrenees. Curiosity about the scene before me, and about all of which it was a part extending far beyond the two horizons, far outstripped the available information, at least available there on the spot. The questions which presented themselves were numberless, the answers to them a mere beggarly inadequate minority.

Yet it is not quite an unfamiliar experience to start off on a journey, even after an honest preparation, and soon find that essentials have been unprovided. These essentials are not always missing from the hand luggage only. There is another luggage kit which every traveler takes or should take along, made up of experience or of inquiry, and nothing else is so apt to mar the pleasure of travel as what may be lacking from that kit. Mere place names and communicating routes are not enough. One needs a few other fundamental facts, some understanding of the physical features, a sketching in however lightly of the political divisions old as well as new, a hint of history here and there, in a way the very things that are omitted from a mere railway map.

Already I heard references to Languedoc, Béarn, Ariège, Roussillon, Bigorre and other places, and though the places were not entirely unfamiliar, the localities for which they stood lacked a definition that was at all comforting. But one is not apt to realize always quite exactly what he wants to know until he finds himself on the spot with the object of his curiosity before him. Just so the sight of the mountains made me want to know so many simple things I could not answer or get answered there in face of the panorama, that I decided to forage at once for fundamental facts about the Pyrenees, their extent and size, their more striking physical features which distinguish them from other mountains, their general history and their political subdivisions.

One is entitled to that. It is not less fair to the country than indispensable to the traveler. Readers who know all about the Pyrenees are therefore forewarned and may skip this brief chapter. Others who like myself confess a lame acquaintance, a vague array of facts, may be willing to share a brief statement of what elsewhere was easily and quickly found.

The Pyrenees extend from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, along the line of their highest peaks, that is to say along the line of the frontier between France and Spain, a distance of two hundred and sixty-six miles. Along the Atlantic littoral the hills roll back gently without a dominating peak for some distance. On the Mediterranean they rise more abruptly from the waters at Cap Cerbère, a rock over seven hundred feet high, and an altitude of three thousand feet is almost immediately attained at the Pic Sailport less than seven miles from Cerbère. But this whole coast is dominated by Mount Canigou which rises ninety-one hundred and thirty-five feet above the sea only twenty-five miles farther inland. At the other end of the range the altitude of Canigou is not equaled until it is slightly topped, sixty-three miles inland from the Atlantic, by the Pic du Midi d'Ossau, which is nearly twice as far from the ocean as Canigou is from the sea. Between these two peaks, a distance of over one hundred and seventy-two miles, the range maintains a curiously even sky-line. A little east of midway between the two coasts it attains its maximum altitude

in the Maladetta group which is topped by the Pic d'Anéto, at eleven thousand one hundred and seventy feet, the highest mountain of the Pyrenees.

The names of the mountains sometimes seem a bit bewildering because nearly every one of them seems to have two names. This is because the Spanish insist on their name and the French on theirs. The Pic d'Anéto is the Spanish form which one often hears and reads in the French form as the Pic de Néthou. Similarly, the Maladetta group becomes the Monts Maudits. The translation of proper names is of course a recognized practise in all languages, but in the Pyrenees one hears both forms indiscriminately, and it is confusing unless one is on guard.

From this crest line the mountainsides fall away in quite a dissimilar manner to the north and to the south. On the southern or Spanish side the line of peaks is paralleled by lines of other peaks, which diminish in height, and nowhere rival the main range, creating a series of east to west valleys. In this way the mountains tumble south some sixty miles until they expire on the edge of the great Spanish plain. On the north or French side the declivity is more abrupt and the valleys lie south to north, from the heights directly to the plain, like gorges burrowing into the flank of the range, side by side, almost its entire length.

The southern side of the range is exposed directly to a merciless sun and vegetation is much less abundant

than on the northern slopes. Moreover, the French slopes are continually refreshed by the soft winds and mists from the Atlantic and the north. The heavily moistened clouds driven down from this direction seem to break on the peaks before they can cross the line and spend themselves in abundant rains on this side. Certain it is that the climate on the Spanish side is dryer and hotter, and rains and vegetation markedly less abundant.

It is because of these fundamental physical facts and their inevitable effect on life that when one speaks of the Pyrenees, in any but a rigid geographical sense, one nearly always means the French side of the international boundary. Although three-quarters of all the mountains are on the Spanish side of the line, yet on the French side nature has assembled three-quarters of their scenic wonders, of their curative springs, soil fertility, water supply and of that ripe old civilization which has etched history there for many more than two thousand years, enriching it with picturesque storied remains which are the delight of the student, of the artist and of the mere seeker of the diversion which some get only or largely from the beautiful and the unusual. The French mountains are the real wonderland of the Pyrenees. The futility of searching for similar sights and interests on the southern side is of a kind with sailing in a calm or fishing out of season. The going and the getting are both apt to be poor.

The physical features which distinguish the Pyrenees from other mountains are the character or the number of

the lakes, the torrents, the waterfalls, the springs and the *cirques*. Except at each end the passes are few and extraordinarily high. For the most part these passages between France and Spain along the central portion of the chain are at an altitude above sixty-five hundred feet and are rarely accessible except to the mountain climber. The lakes or tarns are all secreted in high places just under the crests and are also difficult to attain. There is little vegetation about them and they are thus additionally inhospitable to the camper. The torrents, waterfalls and *cirques* are the natural result of the abrupt descent of the French side. The valleys are as a rule narrow, often mere gorges, and the waters plunging through them are wild and terrible. At their heads these valleys, in some cases, spread into an open circle whose circumference is a vast perpendicular wall of granite under cloud-wrapped crests. These circles are the famed *cirques* which are as numerous here as they are rare elsewhere. They are most numerous to the west of the center of the range. The springs seem to bubble out of every mountain. Many of them rise to the surface boiling and nearly all of them have chemical properties which have recommended them as "cures" to every generation at least as far back as the Romans. Nearly every town has its *Etablissement Thermal* or baths. The fact creeps out continually in the place names, as in Amélie-les-Bains, Venet-les-Bains, Thuès-les-Bains, Ax-les-Thermes, Ussat-les-Bains, Bagnères-de-Luchon, Bagnères-de-

Bigorre, Fontaines Sulfureuses, Eaux-Bonnes, Eaux-Chaudes and less conspicuous examples.

The watersheds to the north and to the south also present quite dissimilar characters. The Spanish torrents seem to flow in all directions, seeking a transverse valley which they travel, over a long course, before they finally emerge from the mountains to the plain or the sea. On this side nearly all the smaller streams feed the River Ebro which rises in the west, so near the Atlantic that the ocean may be seen from the mountain-top above its source, and flows southeastward across the arid plains of Aragon and Catalonia into the Mediterranean below Barcelona. In marked contrast, nearly all the rivers on the French side, larger though still torrential, make a direct northern course from their source and eventually reach the River Garonne, which flows northwestward to the Atlantic at Bordeaux. There are a few exceptions to this general plan of the waterways, but the exceptions appear only at the extremities of the range.

The Pyrenees are familiarly spoken of as a "wall" between France and Spain. To what degree this is true can be understood by consideration of the communications between the north and the south slopes. The mountains are not once crossed by a railroad. The two countries are connected by rail only where the mountains disappear at the water's edge at the eastern and western extremities. The passes, which locally are called *ports* or *cols*, are not only few and extraordinarily high but,

across the greater portion of the range, that is to say the higher portion, there was not a single carriage road up to the middle of the nineteenth century. Even to-day, over the two hundred and twenty-one miles between Mont Perthus, fifteen miles from the sea, and St-Jean-Pied-de-Port, thirty miles from the ocean, there are only three places where wheeled vehicles of any character whatever may cross from France into Spain: the Port d'Urdos, at an altitude of five thousand three hundred and eighty feet, and the neighboring Col du Pourtalet, at fifty-seven hundred and seventy feet, in the west, and the neighboring passes of La Perche and Puymorens, respectively fifty-seven hundred and seventy and sixty-two hundred and ninety-five feet, converging on the Cerdagne, in the east. The stretch between the Col du Pourtalet and the Cerdagne may be crossed only at rare intervals, on foot or mules, in single file, always near the crest of the range and frequently along narrow perilously high precipices.

Of the two railway routes between France and Spain, one connects Marseilles and Barcelona via Perpignan and Narbonne, along the Mediterranean shore; the other connects Bordeaux and Madrid via Bayonne, Biarritz, San Sebastian and Bilbao, along the Atlantic shore. Two east and west lines—one at the base of the French slopes from Narbonne to Bayonne via Carcassonne, Toulouse and Pau, and the other on the Spanish plain from Bilbao to Barcelona—unite the two north and south routes and box the Pyrenees in steel.

The railway across Spain is uniformly at a great distance from the international boundary, an average of nearly seventy miles. Three times it reaches toward the border. A line branches north as far as Pampeluna, forty miles from the boundary; another as far north as Canfranc above Jaca, seven miles from a pass; and the third recently completed reaches Puigcerda near the international line. There is a stretch of one hundred and thirty miles behind the central wall where the railroad in Spain is nowhere so near as forty miles. On the north side, however, owing to the valleys which lead in to the very base of the peaks, the very highest altitudes rise comparatively near the terminals of the numerous spurs which reach in from the main east and west line.

There are three trans-Pyrenean railroads under construction. A direct Toulouse-Barcelona route which will unite the present terminals at Ax-les-Thermes and Puigcerda by way of a tunnel, over three and one-half miles long, under Mount Puymorens, is nearly finished. Another route, directly south from Toulouse, is being extended from St-Girons and Oust, tunneling under the crest, at a point near the Port Salau, to connect with the valley of the River Noguera Pallaresa for Lerida, far to the south, where there is a continuation eastward to Barcelona. The third will pass under the Col de Somport connecting Pau with Jaca.

Monuments which have been discovered in the northern valleys date the occupation of the Pyrenees by man

back into the twilight of unwritten history. The sixth century before this era bequeathed the names of some of these tribes, but little else. When the Romans came to Gaul they found a vigorous extensive population enjoying a considerable civilization along the foot-hills from sea to sea. After the devastating visits of the barbarians in the early Christian period, the Visigoths at the end of the fifth century made an effort to stabilize conditions here and develop arts and crafts. This régime fell in 507 and most of the northern slopes then became a part of France. The next great political disturbance was the invasion of the Saracens from Spain. From this period, the beginning of the eighth century, the Pyrenees really became the battle-ground and later the rampart of Christianity against Islam.

During the Middle Ages several subsidiary political divisions developed, sometimes owing fealty to France, sometimes attached to Spanish kingdoms, and sometimes manifesting a vigorous independence. The principal French independencies during the Middle Ages were maintained at various times and for various periods by the counts of Toulouse, the lords of Comminges, the counts of Bigorre, the viscounts of Béarn and the dukes of Gascony. Beyond so simple a statement a Philistine's discretion dare not go. Political geography in these parts is a deep tangled wildwood. The average Frenchman will become alert and communicative on almost any other phase of old France. Only ask him to make a lit-

tle clear the vague and varying boundaries of Gascony or Navarre, Béarn or Bigorre, and at once his features are mantled o'er with the pale cast of regret. Not regret that he does not know, but regret that you should so far forget yourself as to ask something that no Frenchman could be expected to know.

However, the old names persist to-day in spite of the current divisions and names created by the French Revolution. Before that upheaval the northern slope from east to west fell into these divisions: Roussillon from the Mediterranean to the so-called Republic of Andorra; Foix, comprising the valley of the Ariège; then a narrow strip of Languedoc; Comminges; Quatre Vallées; Bigorre; Béarn and the southwest corner of Gascony. The present political divisions, called Départements, in the same order, are: Pyrénées Orientales, made up of old Roussillon; Ariège, largely the old Comté of Foix, with a part of Languedoc; Haute-Garonne, uniting a bit of Languedoc with Comminges; Hautes-Pyrénées, in which are the Quatre Vallées and Bigorre; and Basses-Pyrénées which includes largely old Béarn and the southwest corner of Gascony.

The history of the long occupancy of this region by man may here be read in the surviving monuments, which are remarkable alike for their number and their character. One seems always to be in sight of some commanding landmark in varying stages of ruin or repair: an abbey or a convent, a château or a fortress, a watch-

tower or a mere wall. Sometimes it rises on an eminence supported by the houses of a village, which has for ages depended upon it for protection. Sometimes it stands alone, on a lonely spur of a valley, from which it commands many miles in several directions. Restored, or in ruins, these monuments, each with a vivid contribution to the story of the peoples which have occupied the surrounding mountains, are always picturesque and often rich in artistic treasure.

As already indicated, the metropolis of the French Pyrenees is Toulouse, for, although it is just in sight of the mountains, it has them almost completely dependent in matters of communication and commerce. At the east end, and at the foot of the range, are Carcassonne and Perpignan, of thirty and forty thousand inhabitants respectively. In similar positions, and of similar size, west of Toulouse, are Pau and Bayonne. The other towns lie along the rivers that tumble northward down the valleys. Their size is not significant of their importance or their interest. On the Mediterranean there is Port-Vendres, a mere handful of people, yet next to Marseilles it is France's most important seaport connection with her oversea possessions in Africa. Near by is Elne, merely a few score houses huddled on the rocks, but the ghost of a glorious past. South of Toulouse, on the Ariège, sit Foix and Ax-les-Thermes; St-Girons, on the Salat, is market town to the valleys of the Rivers Salat and Garbet; Montréjeau is chiefly a junction for the

health and pleasure pilgrims on their way up to Luchon; Lourdes, whose shrine has made it populous, is similarly a junction for Cauterets and Luz and Gavarnie; beyond Bayonne is Biarritz, queen of France's seaside resorts, and her charming little brother St-Jean-de-Luz. In Spain there are few significant communities. San Sebastian, to be sure, duplicates many of the glories of Biarritz on the ocean; but inland, and along the entire length of the mountains, are only Pampeluna and Jaca, near the Atlantic; and, farther west, Seo de Urgel, Puigcerda and Figueras.

CHAPTER III

Toulouse and Its Towers

TOULOUSE—THE PINK CITY—THE SACRED LAKE—A TOWN OF TOWERS—SAINT SERNIN—A PIG IN A PULPIT—THE ARBITRARY COLUMNS OF THE CHURCH OF THE JACOBINS—CONTRARINESS OF SAINT ETIENNE'S CATHEDRAL—THE STORY OF ITS ODDMENTS AND REMAINDERS—THE HÔTEL D'ASSÉZAT AND THE FLORAL GAMES—WHAT THE BRIDE MISSED AT LA DAURADE—WHEN TOULOUSE RELAXES.

There is no better place from which to begin an acquaintance with the old southern city of Toulouse than from that same Hill of the Column. Here, unguardedly and unconsciously, she reveals herself in some of her most characteristic moods.

Where else, for instance, would one find southern leisure and sociability expressed as it is by the score of card games which the ancients of the city play up here, under the cool and intimate shadows of the sturdy little trees which shade the park? Here they are, a group in every spot of shade, forming a communal open-air card club. The chairs and tables are on the whole, however, less suggestive of a permanent organization than of a spontaneous idea, which had unaccountably seized a whole neighborhood at the same moment, as such furniture is bound to be when boxes and boards are the whole

equipment, save for a few collapsible camp-stools. The improvised tables are of unequal sizes as drawing-boards and bread-boards and lap-boards and just boards are apt to be. They have every appearance of such ancestry. As for legs, there are no less than twice the number usually assigned to the support of a card-table, for instead of only four they are no fewer than the eight legs of the players, who draw their seats close, and bump knees intimately, for this purpose. It's a quiet club-room on the whole. Toulouse is a quiet city. Whatever busy hum there may be far below is entirely muffled by distance. The players talk little, or at least low. Their felt slippers contribute a no less quieting and comforting aspect to the scene than the wisps of blue smoke which drift idly from prized old pipes. These same pipes made me wonder what their word was for dudheen. The game is the thoroughly French one of *La Manille,* and there is generally an incidental clink and jingle, which suggests a seasoning, as, one might say, of the pep out of peppermint, and probably makes the play exhilarating as well as amusing.

Turning southward again, and lowering the eyes from the misty horizon of the mountains to the foreground, one sees the city spread out in a wide encircling panorama on the plain below. From this height one might mistake it for Paris seen from Montmartre, with the sunned surface of the Garonne flowing through the middle distance somewhat as if it were the Seine. One might but one does not, for, overlooking the details, no one

could mistake the outlook here for the gray walls and black slate roofs of Paris. Built almost entirely of brick, roofed almost exclusively with tiles, it is here at once apparent why Toulouse is so often called *La Cité Rose*, the Pink City. Such it blushingly discloses itself, delicate and radiant, distinctive, a thing apart, of its own kind; worth knowing for this incomparable pink shell even if that were its only challenge to interest.

What I most wanted to see in Toulouse was gone. It had been gone some time, in fact more than a century before the zero year of the Christian calendar. Yet it would have been interesting to have seen that Sacred Lake to which the city seems to have owed its early prosperity. It would have been interesting, if only it were possible, to have seen the confident pilgrims approach, from distant villages of the plain and of the mountains, and cast coins to the waters and the gods in expectation of divine favors. Even more interesting would it have been to have watched the Consul Cepion, less reverent than practical, drain the lake and appropriate the golden deposit. This put an end to the lake of course, but also to Cepion's popularity, for the act was looked upon as a sacrilege, and, on account thereof, he seems thereafter to have done no better than to have gone from bad to worse. Unfortunately his cupidity seems to have been rather fraught with disillusionment for the pilgrims and it was never deemed worth while to fill the lake again, at least with water. The centuries have erased it with

another filling, into which sink somewhere the foundations of the homes of the Toulousians, who seem to have little knowledge and less thought of the ancient gods and the holy waters, and the coin-casting pilgrims.

If ancient "Tolosa," as it was first known, had then to fall back upon other attractions to bring visitors to its gates, its visitors doubtless found them in the beauty of the buildings and monuments, and in the atmosphere of art and literature which the Romans early established here. Curiously, to-day the same kind of attraction attaches to modern Toulouse. Evidences of the Roman wars which beat about its early battlements are gone with the Sacred Lake, as completely as if Cepion had washed them away when he released its waters or had carted them off with its sacred deposits. One searches in vain for remains of the Visigoths, who swept down on the city and conquered it at the beginning of the fifth century, and kept it for nearly a hundred years the capital of their kingdom, when that extended from the Rhone to the Atlantic and from the Loire to Gibraltar. Gone, too, are the castles and donjons which saw the grim religious conflicts throughout the thirteenth century when, as the capital of the Albigensian heresy, it was the center of the first ominous rumble which afterward broke in the Reformation. Even the old walls which stood the brunt of attack and siege have been razed, dust of the same dust as are now defenders and besiegers, and lazy shady avenues trace their old lines.

Yet to-day, as two thousand years ago, Toulouse finds its distinction in its architecture and its letters. In architecture its riches rank it next after Paris and Rouen in all France. Its schools, its learned societies and its publishing houses rank it as a French cultural center second only to Paris.

Seen from the Hill of the Column the most conspicuous characteristic of Toulouse, next after that delicate glow which suffuses the whole city and gives it its nickname, are its towers. They are six, and rise from right to left, in a curving sweep from north to south, St. Sernin, the Cordeliers, the Jacobins, the Dalbade, the Augustins and St. Etienne.

The towers of Toulouse are of a pattern all their own. At first glance there is something Chinese, pagoda-like, in their repeated and diminishing stories, and in their ornate redundant detail. But scrutiny punctures the oriental idea. They are, as a matter of fact, a blend of Roman and Gothic, but most of all, and best, they are just themselves, really unlike any others away from this southern country which imitates them, built of the pink brick which, like them, is Toulouse's own. Only St. Etienne's is totally unlike the others, but in its inexplicable irregularity it is unlike any other tower. That of the Dalbade is a modification, in that it lacks tapering lines, and is square instead of octagonal. The four others are alike in all else but the evidences of time's iconoclastic hand.

The tower of the Cordeliers stands like a huge blasted column many times higher than any surrounding buildings. The great church of which it was the crowning ornament was destroyed by a fire in 1870. The high support of the tower remains with only two of the octagonal tiers above it, defaced and pathetic, crippled and blind, yet noble in its gaunt defiance. The church of the Augustins is now a part of the Museum, and its tower rises to no greater height than the Cordeliers. But its two remaining stages retain all the grace of the original detail. That of the Jacobins rises above that famously high Gothic church for four full stories and, though it has lost its spire, it still retains its ornate balustrade and the eight pinnacles at the corners of the octagon. The most beautiful of all Toulouse's towers, however, perhaps because most nearly in a state of perfect preservation, is that of St. Sernin. There no detail is lacking, from the incomparable church, which forms its support, up to the vanishing tip of the central pinnacle which rises out of the crowning balustrade, a poem in symmetry, delicacy and color against the cloudless blue.

Across the city we made our way to draw dividends in details on the investment in that first general panorama. It is a pleasant walk down the hill, across the busy canal, of which there will be more to tell later, along the length of the Rue Bayard, with a sharp turn to the right and another to the left, and down the little Rue St. Bernard. This otherwise commonplace little street

seems to open miraculously for the best possible view and approach to the great oval place in which centers St. Sernin, one of the greatest Romanesque churches in existence and a monument which comprises all that is most significant in Toulousan Romanesque architecture. This is the best approach, even if it is from the back. Though the church was consecrated in the eleventh century the façade is not yet finished. The favored entrance is not even by the great front doors, nor by either of the "twin doors" in the transept ends, but by the exquisite Porte Miégeville, midway along its east side, after passing through the detached outer gateway so gracefully representative of the Renaissance. Its mass reveals itself best, however, from a point near the end of the little street of St. Bernard.

One is unlucky indeed not to happen thus upon the shady sweep of the Place St. Sernin on a Sunday morning, to find himself in the midst of the crowded lively market which establishes itself here and in the adjoining streets for the sale of every conceivable second-hand object. It is a sale of great antiquity and immensely popular with the citizenry, and it is much more genuinely a rummage sale than the better known Rag Market in Rome. Out of this motley, over the tree-tops, rises the superb assemblage of choir, transepts, chapel bays, vast lateral expanse of roofs and finally, in all its detail, supported and harmonized with the splendid edifice it crowns, the tower. And you need not linger longer than

The Cathedral of St. Etienne at Toulouse, the Roman nave in the foreground, and the Gothic choir beyond at the left of the Orleans column

Carcassonne

a quarter of an hour, enjoying the color and movement of the street below and the grandeur of the building above, before the lofty carillon peals out a portion of the *Ave Maria de Lourdes,* and if it be the stroke of the hour it rings the hymn in full.

Up there, where these sweet tones ring out, the tower itself seems music to the eye. Tier after tier it rises, made light and lace-like in effect by the two twin windows on each of the octagonal faces of each of the five tiers. The windows of the three lower tiers are round at the top in the Roman manner, and those of the two upper tiers are pointed at the top in the Gothic manner. The difference in the styles may be accounted for by the lapse of time between the placing of the lower and upper tiers. The effect, however, whether accidental or designed, is to lighten the structure toward the top and help a transition from a considerable circumference at the base to a pointed ethereal spire. The names of the artists who invented the particular style of the Toulousan towers have been forgotten somewhere in the ten careless centuries which have passed by them since first they rose to life, more nearly immortal than the deserving fame of their creators. These masterpieces are monuments to mere anonymity.

In spite of the preference for the Porte Miégeville, we made the circuit of the church to the rough unfinished front, and entered by one of the two twin doors here. Such an approach I always feel is due the architect. In-

evitably, no matter what tricks later custom plays, he planned the arrangement of all interior details for their effect when seen first from the foot of the nave. And from what other spot in a church can one get that ordered assembly of all the parts which, at first and at once, reveals the full force of the creator's idea in its entirety? Moreover, this position gives a point of departure from which each subsequently seen detail discloses its relative value as well as its inherent beauty.

If it is especially true that the exterior of St. Sernin has more to reveal from behind the apse, one may be equally sure of finding at the foot of the nave the only possible unified view of the interior. It is an enormous church, three hundred and thirty-seven feet long and two hundred feet across the transept. Yet when one abandons the wall between the front doors one is lost in a maze of columns, and all sense of vastness disappears except upward into the distant shadowy vaultings. The wide nave is made to seem narrow by double rows of columns, which extend the length of the church, turning to meet inside the façade and again in following the curve of the apse behind the choir and the main altar. Space and perspective are further annihilated here by the especially large columns where the nave and transept cross. They were built to support the great tower. But all these broken spaces give the willing seeker a reward in separate vistas that gain in beauty and mystery by the high close lines which frame them. One wanders among

the columns of St. Sernin as one might wander among the still close-set giants of a petrified forest. But the game here is infinitely more plentiful.

There are abundant works of art. With a delicate modesty, however, they make themselves inconspicuous in all sorts of detached and unexpected places, and have to be searched for in the game of hide and seek one plays so long as one remains here among the columns. In spite of their own undoubted values, everything else in this church appears to be merely accessory to the ostentatious tomb of St. Sernin. This is seen, in detached peeps, through the bronze grille which encloses the sanctuary. It rises behind and above the main altar, supported on the backs of four bronze bulls, and surmounted by a canopied group symbolic of the saint's apotheosis. The bulls refer to his martyrdom, when he was dragged to his death, at the heels of one of these animals, through the neighboring Rue du Taur.

One other animal near by caught our fancy. This one is cut in wood, an inconspicuous detail of the elaborately carved choir-stalls. He is a pig and he stands in a pulpit. This preaching pig seemed eloquent of the satiric spirit of the monastic sculptor, for it is said to have been his joke on John Calvin whom he intended it should represent.

Once the eye is saturated with the art treasures, which are here more abundant than rich, and with the shadowy vistas, what is next most interesting is the unusual number of devotional treasures, relics of the saints,

among them six of the Apostles, in which this church is so exceptional. In most instances the relic is but a physical trifle, often a splinter of bone, of no more than a hair's thickness, yet enshrined in a jeweled container on the breast of a life-size portrait bust of the venerated original. The impressiveness of this display is enhanced by the search one makes for the treasure chamber, through the ambulatory, behind the grand tomb, and at the foot of winding mysterious stone stairways, in a shadowy crypt of gorgeous decorations. To have neglected the devotional significance of these objects, and assessed only the ornate physical values, we could have imagined ourselves in the treasure chamber of Aladdin.

The vested custodian, though a little thrifty as to light, which he gave us from a single candle, we thought rather miraculously human, genial, communicative and casual, in the presence of such sacred charges. Among many kernels of information, he pointed out one rather unique distinction which these relics give to this church. It seems that their presence makes it a shrine of such peculiar sacredness that none but the canonized may be buried here. Sure enough, when wandering our way out of the church, we saw none of the sculptured tablets and monuments which in such an edifice usually proclaim the last resting place of nobles, ecclesiastics, poets, artists, statesmen and other such, whose lives were considered worth remembering.

The tower of the former church and convent of the

Jacobins is best seen from the sadly decayed cloister close. The buildings are now a part of the Lycée, and a custodian was somewhat difficult to find in the vacation period. But, once discovered, he proved as affable and informing as the curator of the crypt of St. Sernin, as amiable as all Toulousans seem inclined to be. Whatever moved the builders to produce a church of this kind even our voluble guide could not explain. He recited simply that its nave is among the highest, if not the longest, in France, that it was commenced in 1230, and was consecrated just two centuries before America was discovered (a sly way of hinting he knew an American when he saw one or, possibly, when he heard one trying to talk his French), and that the mutilations all date from the days of Napoleon. With that he left us to observe by far the most wonderful feature of this church, one that, it may be believed, distinguishes it from every other church in the world. If St. Sernin's presents a forest of columns, this church of the Jacobins has curiously few. But they make up in circumference what they lack in numbers, and they further distinguish themselves by marching in single file straight through the center of the length of the nave, toward the center of the main altar, dividing the church into two long equal parts. There was no information as to the author or the reason of this curiosity. This astonishing behavior on the part of ecclesiastical columns left us without further interest in minor conventionalities here.

But one soon discovers that Toulouse, though bearing up under her share of commonplaces—among them her streets and hotels—has a group of churches whose unconventionality is perhaps unmatched by any other group in the world. A fresh start on another day took us off to the south side of the city, where astonishment was stimulated anew by the strange performances of the Cathedral of St. Etienne. It will be remembered that another church of St. Etienne, that "du Mont," in the shadow of the Panthéon in Paris, is somewhat of an architectural motley, and owes not a little of its charm to that fact. But the Paris St. Etienne is the last word in conventionality compared to the St. Etienne of Toulouse.

The façade of this St. Etienne is a hint of its interior. It is everything in its entirety, it is nothing in particulars. It seems as if, once upon a time, it had been taken apart, as a child might pull apart a building of blocks, and put together in the dark. Built before the weirdisms of the cubists, they are suggested nevertheless by its interruptions and juxtapositions. The great door is off center, the sky-line of the façade is on the bias, arches appear without relation to one another or to any pattern, and the tower is of no particular style, with an erratic interruption of windows and scraps of other towers, begun and abandoned, yet clinging to it. Now all this, by the very fact of its incoherence, by the beauty of its portal and the grace of its lofty belfry, contributes to a façade to conjure with. It is fascinating and unforgetable.

From the exterior promise the church appears rather small inside. One observes casually that it is without columns, that its walls are hung with interesting tapestries, that—is it believable?—yes—the main altar is in the corner, the end of the nave is partly open, and at the edge of this opening, which is the center of the nave, is a single column, easily the largest that ever found its way into a church, a giant, interrupting, intruding, concealing, or only partly concealing another large church beyond the opening on its left! One passes the giant column and, from a Roman nave, one passes, not directly but diagonally, into a Gothic choir, a choir twice the length of the nave!

The outlook from this gateway is only a little less than unreal. Stone, wood, tapestry and glass are assembled in a miraculous union. Centered above the altar is a high chiseled relief of the stoning of St. Etienne, framed by the grille about the sanctuary and the light Gothic arches above the triforium. Yet all is chastely severe with scarcely any ornamentation. Under the ceiling on the left there is, however, one lonely but cheerful cherub bearing an armorial shield, the last of a whole heavenly train, with their armfuls of earthly vanities, which once surrounded the entire choir.

And what is the effect of all this confusion of style, this unconventionality of position, this general askewness? At first a bit bewildering, it gradually attracts, and ends by fascinating, a relief, a tonic, somehow hu-

man. This strange crooked superb church has the same beauty that gives character to the human countenance. Rigid regularity of feature, mathematical balance and a lineless surface make only for a doll-like prettiness. It is when the features vary, the drawing deviates from plumb, and the surface is etched with significant lines, that the human countenance has a story to tell. In the same way the crooked motley church of St. Etienne is eloquent. It has a story.

The beginnings of this group date back to the remote Christian days when the years were written in three figures. The chronicles are silent about these beginnings, simply and guardedly remarking that the nave was still standing in the eleventh century. Thereafter nearly every century appears to have worked a change. About 1190 all columns were removed from the nave and the Gothic vaulting was thrown across the breadth of sixty-five feet, then the boldest work of this kind yet attempted. While this change was in progress war came battering at the adjacent city ramparts and the frightened workmen were for laying down their tools. Raymond, the sixth count of Toulouse to bear that name, was of another mind. He locked the journeymen up at their job and left them no escape from the threatening enemy except to finish the arches.

After nearly another hundred years came the bishop, Bertrand de l'Isle, who sought to give Toulouse a Gothic rival of the great cathedrals of northern France. If he

so far has failed in that, his is at least the distinction of giving his city this unique group of "oddments and remainders" which survives to-day. The choir of his ambitious plan rose near, but off the axis of the standing nave, which it was expected the new cathedral nave would destroy and supplant. The good Bertrand started only an unfinished scheme, and, equally unintentionally, an endless war between the Gothic and the Romanesque.

During the succeeding centuries vast sums were devoted to elaborate embellishments, alternately on Roman nave and Gothic choir, sums which might have carried the cathedral to completion. Yet who would now have it other than as it is? Were the Toulousans shrewd enough to see this? At any rate they went along neglecting the choir and embellishing their old church. In the earlier part of the fifteenth century the beautiful Gothic door was raised, but curiously it failed to register center on the rose window above. It even maintains an independent contempt for the center of the whole front of which it is a part, and for the great arch which seems to form its halo. Soon after, the noble tower began to rise at the corner, and, about the same time, a deal of statuary appeared on the façade, but it has wandered away without trace.

For nearly two hundred more years the two great contradictory buildings stood adjacent but unconnected, when along came a man with an idea. The man was the Cardinal d'Orléans, a nephew of Louis XI. His idea, on

which he acted effectively, was to break out the end wall of the old nave, erect in the center of the opening the great sustaining pillar which has ever since borne his name, and so unite choir and nave, Gothic and Romanesque, in the strangest and most interesting union they have ever known. He, too, added the seventeen chapels which surround the choir. Except for restoration, after a destructive fire in 1609, this curious and beautiful agglomeration has stood for over four hundred years substantially unchanged.

There are other important but less interesting churches in Toulouse, and there are many mansions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which are well worth hunting. There is, however, one other church and one of those mansions, or "hôtels," which stand out with an interest all their own. So closely were the church of Notre Dame de la Daurade and the neighboring Hôtel d'Assézat attached to each other in interest that it was not easy to decide which to visit first. Their bond of union is the Académie des Jeux-Floraux. This society has given Toulouse distinction since first it was founded, in the year 1323, under the delightful name of Le Collège du Gai Savoir, a name which any one who prefers it in English is free to translate.

L'Académie des Jeux-Floraux is not only the oldest literary society in Europe, it is also entirely of its own kind. Its membership consists of forty "*mainteneurs,*" pledged to maintain the language and literature of Lan-

guedoc, and of a number of "*maîtres-ès-jeux,*" laureats who have been crowned at least three times. The Floral Games have since their inception been held annually in the month of May. In them the poets and other writers of Languedoc contend for the nine flowers of gold and silver which give the ancient society its name. On the third day of that spring month, after the blessing of the flowers in the church of Notre Dame de la Daurade, the members of the academy and the contestants meet at its home in the adjoining street, in the Hôtel d'Assézat et de Clémence Isaure, where award is made of the amaranth of gold and the violet, lily, eglantine, primrose and marigold of silver for poetry; the violet or eglantine and immortelle or jasmine of gold for prose; and a carnation of silver as a consolation prize. In the ornate court of the Hôtel d'Assézat, its more formal lines softened with the green of clinging vines, it is not difficult to lace one's lashes and see in fancy the long procession of poets who have sung their songs and borne away their flowers. To the French the names of most of them are familiar. But whose interest is not quickened in finding among the successful young aspirants the names of Victor Hugo, de Vigny, Thiers, Lamartine, Chateaubriand, Mistral, Coppée, René Bazin and Rostand?

Though they go first to the church of La Daurade, we went there last. It is a fine structure with a splendid portal which, from within, when open, frames an idyllic picture of the Garonne and the Pont Neuf. Being a Tou-

louse church one is quite prepared to find it a bit queer. One of its peculiarities is that it is almost entirely shut in and obscured by houses, and another is that its front door is reserved for ceremony, thus requiring the casual pilgrim, be he religious or secular, to seek admission at "No. 29" in a quaint street some distance behind it. There he discovers the mouth of a long dark tortuous tunnel at the far end of which he turns abruptly and finds himself inside the church about midway the nave.

At the moment of our arrival the church was somewhat alive with a funeral, but we lingered on the outskirts respectfully, making the acquaintance of the treasures, among them the unusual white porcelain and terra-cotta angels and saints above the altars, and searching for the spot where the noble lady Clémence Isaure is said to be buried, having seen her statue in the court of the Hôtel d'Assézat, and heard, with admiration, of her endowment of the Floral Games. This tradition naturally has made of the lady a picturesque and much beloved memory. It was all true, too, we were informed; all, except that she had neither lived or died or endowed. In a word it was more than hinted that she was a fiction. But perhaps among the poets who have partaken of her alleged benefaction many prefer to plead poetic license and cling to their veneration of her. At any rate there is the legend, her name, her statue, her alleged burial place and certainly the gold and silver flowers for the laureats each May.

Before leaving La Daurade we witnessed an extraordinary little drama. It was in three brief acts, and the like of it is surely seldom seen on one spot in so short a space of time. As the funeral procession left the church by the splendid front door, a little army of old women appeared and stripped the altar of its black, frisked the catafalque and candlesticks out of sight, and rolled up the black floor strip which extended from sanctuary to front door. In place of these appeared carpets of crimson, an altar pendulum of white and gold, and blooming bouquets and blazing candelabra. It seemed an interval of but a few minutes, after the somber dirge, when the organ broke out in a triumphal strain, and a bridal party entered and advanced to the brilliant altar, along the same path so recently carpeted in black. When this ceremony was over, like busy scene-shifters, the old women transformed the trappings for another funeral. We did not wait for it, but left with a chill of apprehension for that confident young bride, whose horizon was all hope and happiness, if her morning had not passed on schedule, and coming or going, or both, she had met the other procession, and been too vividly reminded.

A little soberly we trailed away, along the river to the curving Rue Gambetta and thence to one of the gay cafés in the Place du Capitole—or should have, though perhaps that acquaintance was made another day—for this square is the very core of the life of Toulouse. One whole side is faced by the pleasing façade of the pink and

white old Capitole. Opposite are shops behind a long cool colonnade. There are some cafés under this colonnade but the cafés almost completely usurp the two remaining sides of the square, their little metal tables and chairs spreading themselves out-of-doors in warm weather, monopolizing the sidewalks, and crowding foot-passengers off on the uneven and uncomfortable cobbles of the street. But in southern Europe no one minds giving over the sidewalks to the cafés. What could be fairer, since every one seems to take refuge in the seats about the tables, and few care to walk? They seem to regard the sidewalk as primarily a place to sit, and sip, and gossip, and watch the rest of the world go by.

The Place du Capitole is by day a hive of petty merchants, a people's market. The booths and stalls look permanent enough in the morning, but they are mere tables, or trestles, or other collapsible mysteries, which, with the commodities they support, fold up and steal away soon after noon. Then the smooth flags are washed down by strong streams from the hydrants, and the wide square, now neat and clean, reveals an inner circle of tall masts gay with the tricolor of the Republic. About these masts is another circle of tall lamp-posts, whose lights make the evening a little bright for the canny strollers who here pick up free the tunes from the bands of the surrounding cafés.

There are other groups of cafés, some in the near-by oval Place LaFayette, some along the broad Boulevard

Strassbourg. But the Place du Capitole embodies so much variety, and on such a broad scale, that it is here one reverts in memory, as one would return if there, to find Toulouse at play and at rest.

CHAPTER IV

Carcassonne

A CANAL THAT CUTS OFF GIBRALTAR—THE RIDE TO CARCASSONNE—NEWEST AMERICAN MOVIES IN OLDEST FRANCE—NEW CARCASSONNE—POLITICS AND PLACE-NAMES—VISION OF THE OLD CITÉ—ITS WALLS AND TOWERS—WARFARE WHEN CARCASSONNE WAS IMPREGNABLE—A TWIN OF THE SAINTE CHAPELLE—TRANSLUCENT TAPESTRIES—THE CORNICE OF FOUR HUNDRED HEADS—NIGHT BENEATH THE WALLS OF CARCASSONNE.

Nearly every one knows Carcassonne by way of Gustave Nadaud's refrain, "I never have seen Carcassonne." These five words are a classic instance of a phrase which has immortalized a poem, its author and, in a way, its subject. People who have never heard otherwise of Carcassonne have heard of this plaint of the old peasant of Limoux. People who do not know where Carcassonne is on the map, know that it stands at the end of the last line of each stanza of one of the most famous poems of at least two languages.

So it was with the twofold elation of being about to see one of the most celebrated sights in all the world, and of thereby raising ourselves out of that vast class to whom the famous old city is a mere name and an aspiration but not an experience, that we discovered it directly

in our path from Toulouse to the little city of Perpignan, near the Mediterranean, where we would base our entrance into the Pyrenees.

Perhaps the broad valley, which stretches southeastward fifty-six miles from Toulouse to Carcassonne, is not one to excite interest or stimulate enthusiasm. Perhaps the green of the fields is not greener, perhaps the old gray towns and towers on the hillsides and hilltops are not more picturesque than other medieval remnants, perhaps there is no more occasion here than in other foothills to be thrilled by mounting heights and imagined peaks off toward that border which is our objective. Perhaps not. But so it seemed when I saw it unroll for the first time, when every object gave the exhilaration of novelty, and so it seemed on other trips over the same ground, when the pleasure was stimulated in part by familiarity and in part by memory, regardless of the mere objects in the outlook. And this conviction was as good as a reality, since thinking made it so, as we are assured by a saying which was new when all we thought so fine here was already very, very old.

There are three ways by which one may go from Toulouse to Carcassonne: by railway, by well paved road and by water. The outlooks are identical, as the ways are practically parallel. The hills roll away gently in the upper valley and, first on one side and then on the other, high up, and far enough away to give them a setting of land and sky, are quaint old towns holding aloft

either variations in miniature of the Toulousan towers or, equally characteristic of this country, the broad but shallow belfrys with three pinnacles, and three arched openings framing the sharp silhouettes of the bronze bells against the blue beyond. In this valley one becomes acquainted with the platane trees which shade the little squares in the towns and line roadways and the water.

Here, along the foot of these mountains of a thousand streams driven by forces spontaneous and irresistible, the waterway is artificial, the work of mere man, a canal. But it had a great idea behind it. Sometimes it is called the Canal du Midi, and sometimes the Canal de Languedoc, and it is one of the notable engineering feats of France. It is not forgotten that a Frenchman conceived and began the union of the waters of the Atlantic and the Pacific at Panama. Three hundred years earlier, another Frenchman dreamed of cutting off Spain and Gibraltar by uniting the Mediterranean and the Atlantic with a canal across southern France. It is a bit ironic that the Panama Canal was finished by aliens and succeeded, but that the Canal du Midi finished by the French has not realized the expectations that were hoped of it.

Nevertheless, there it is, an accomplished fact, bold in conception, skilful in execution, although to-day serving only a minor local town-to-town traffic, a picturesque ribbon of water in whose quiet depths one sees reflected its grassy banks, the tall platanes and cypresses which line each side, and the white islands of the sky above.

The canal joins the Garonne River to complete the union of the two seas. The Garonne is generally navigable from Bordeaux, at its embochure on the Atlantic, as far as Toulouse; but transportation is helped over the difficult places in these one hundred and fifty miles by the Canal Lateral, which parallels it much of the way. At Toulouse the river turns sharply to the south, and degenerates into a mountain torrent, with its sources far up in the high places of the Pyrenees. To connect its navigable waters with the Mediterranean required a canal another one hundred and fifty miles long, every foot of which had to be constructed. It was made between 1666 and 1681. Baron Paul Riquet de Bonrepos was the engineer, and he must have been a very rich man for he defrayed the expense entirely out of his private fortune. This waterway measures thirty-five feet wide at the bottom and sixty-five feet on the surface, and it is six and a half feet deep. Its highest point, in crossing the watershed between the ocean and the sea, is at Segala, half way between Toulouse and Carcassonne, six hundred and twenty feet above sea level. Its waters are lowered two hundred and five feet through seventeen locks to the Garonne and through forty-eight locks to the Mediterranean, near Agde. It is supplied with water from the basin of Naurouze, one thousand, two hundred feet long and nine hundred feet broad, near Segala, which basin in turn is fed from the great reservoir of St. Ferréol, fifteen miles northwest. Here the waters are gathered be-

hind a wall of masonry five thousand, two hundred feet long and one hundred and fifty feet high. On the shore of the basin of Naurouze stands a monument to the creator of the Canal du Midi, and near by is his house, which was rendered further historic in 1814 when, after the battle of Toulouse, Wellington and Soult came here to sign the armistice.

Observing the old cities on the hills, and following the line of the canal by its green border of trees, crossing and recrossing it from time to time, picking up its story bit by bit from fellow passengers, dividing attention to a radiant sunset behind us with the approach of the mountains on our right, all provided a pleasant exhilaration, which made the distance as nothing, before we unconsciously found ourselves surrounded by the houses of Carcassonne. With much regret we realized that we had missed the approach and entrance. Later, we discovered it was better so, for this north and west approach discloses only commonplaces.

Carcassonne is sharply divided into two sections, two cities, the old and the new. One arrives in the new city, but the old city is the attraction. The old city stands crowded behind its walls and towers on a hill, on one side of the little River Aude; the new city spreads out on the flat plain below on the other bank. The old city is probably the largest and most nearly perfect specimen extant built to give and take battle after the ancient methods. The new city is laid out with streets at right angles, flat

The walls of Carcassonne. The Round Tower of Justice and the High Square Tower of the Château

Notre Dame Gate at Perpignan

as the checker-board it resembles, and has little to distinguish it from a score of other cities of thirty thousand French. The old city has a past stretching indefinitely into the twilight of history. The new city is by comparison a civic upstart, for it had its beginning as late as 1247.

We found excellent lodgings at a fine hotel overlooking the Jardin des Plantes, a large shady square near the station. The day had been as hot as the plains of southern France could produce in mid-summer. Toulouse had been a stern reminder of the classic wheeze about our own Yuma, and I felt that the old remark, as to the chances of a snow-ball in hell, would, hereafter, have added significance for me with hell eliminated and Toulouse substituted. So, tired and grimy and hot, we put off visiting the old city till morning and decided to be content over night with the atmosphere of merely the last seven centuries. Refreshed by bath and fresh linen and good food, we spent the evening on our own private balcony, cooled by the night breeze from the mountains, and entertained in a manner most unexpected.

On the pavement underneath our windows the hotel maintained the inevitable sidewalk café. Across the street, on the edge of the park, there was a moving picture screen to divert the patrons. The free show proved a good attraction, for the tables and chairs filled the entire street, to the exclusion of all traffic, if there was any, and crowds packed every available space.

Aloof and cool and comfortable, we enjoyed the gay multitude below, and saw films which, except for the French inserts, were the exact duplicates of those in all American towns every day in the year. The feature film showed the usual story of the young New Yorker plunged in the excitement of Arizona ranch life, and though it was all as familiar to those French as to us, yet for them it had doubtless the spice of the remote and the exotic, a tale of strange peoples in strange lands. The situation was a bit strange for us, truly a bit incongruous: our western mountains on a silver screen at the foot of the Pyrenees! Hollywood in Carcassonne!

The longer reel was followed by a comedy. At the moment that it was announced we were interested in the crowd. But they were interested in the screen, and they brought our attention back to it by the first enthusiasm of the evening, a lively murmur of expectancy and a general patter of applause. Glancing at the screen I saw it announced a comedy by "Charlot." Now this is the French trade-name of Charlie Chaplin, who here, in this little frequented corner of France, was just as well known and understood and loved by the children, old and young, as in every other corner of the earth. That night, the last of kinship with the old peasant of Limoux who never had seen Carcassonne, I fell asleep with a somewhat scrambled consciousness of the antique and the ultra modern, fortified cities and western ranches, knights and cowboys, armor and shaps, jesters in motley

and a black bowler; yet underlying all the base was the same, fair ladies, brave men, the heroic and the sinister, love, intrigue, contest, mating, just unchanging universal human nature.

In the morning we again deferred going immediately to the old city, as one sometimes defers just a little longer doing things long looked forward to, toying with anticipation, as if the poignancy were either too bitter or too sweet to taste at once. The new Carcassonne would surely be flat and unprofitable once one had known the old, so it seemed better to linger here with one a little, on the threshold of the other. This "new" town rewarded the morning's walk through its narrow shaded streets and squares. As between the Musée and the Cathedral of St. Vincent, the latter held the deeper interest, with its extraordinarily wide nave; its quaint old tower, visible at a great distance, and picturesque from all directions, not least when nearest; and the old stonework and statuary of its façade. What stone is this that has surrendered so quickly to time and the elements? It has lost all its sharp lines, and to-day seems but a soft dreamy suggestion of what it was before the weathers of seven centuries had rubbed and corroded and eaten away the features of the saints and all distinctness from the bevels and arches and decorations.

The streets have less of an effort at modernity in their every other feature than in their names. It is so everywhere with the French. They have a passion for

erasing the older names of their streets and squares, and substituting the names of the latest national idea or event or the latest political hero, be he a compatriot or an ally. The last at least remains at times to torture the native with chagrin and embarrassment. These names call attention too often to the brevity of political popularity, and to the swift readjustment of international interests. Carcassonne may be sleepy and slow, and for that it may be grateful that it has not, as have so many other French towns, streets and parks named for the allied signers of the treaty of Versailles. Otherwise, however, it has erased much of its early character and, on corners old as the Crusades, one reads the names of politicians of yesterday and to-day.

The liveliest square in the new city, one of the loveliest little old squares in all Europe, is now called the Place Carnot. Not so long ago it was the Place aux Herbes. With homage to Sadi Carnot, nevertheless, how perfect was its own old name, grown out of the ages of custom and tradition, one feels in the presence of the gay kiosks and colorful awnings of the market which every morning brings together here the bargaining housewives, the shrewd gardeners, and the fresh vivid greens from the hillsides beyond the town. Place Carnot, indeed! What had Sadi Carnot to do with this ripe and aged square with its soft toned house fronts, its priceless Baratara fountain in once white marble, its traffic in all those stems and stalks and leaves which for ages have

gone into the pots and skillets and salad-bowls of this venerable community? It was and is the Place aux Herbes in spite of arbitrary politicians. Custom made it so, custom, it seems, must inevitably bring back the old, the real name.

One turns away softened a bit by the glowing picture about the old fountain, and strolls off to find the river, knowing that on the other side of the Aude is the shrine of this particular day's pilgrimage. Threading through the intervening streets one gets neither aid nor atmosphere from signs which proclaim them the Rues Verdun, Voltaire, and Camille Pelletan. Suddenly one comes upon a name happily unchanged, the Rue du Vieux Pont, the street of the Old Bridge. That means something. We are back again in old France. At its end, sure enough, looms the Pont Vieux, there since the thirteenth century, its eight unequal arches framing eight varied pictures. With not easily suppressed excitement we press on to the little river, and raise our eyes to the vision above the trees, against the sky beyond, to the walls, the battlements, the more than half a hundred towers of Carcassonne, the most unique, complete and picturesque ensemble of ancient and medieval civic defenses which survives.

Before leaving Paris for the Pyrenees I had written a friend briefly, "I am going to Carcassonne," and when I arrived there, there was waiting, by way of reply, a copy of Julia G. R. Dorr's poem which I had never seen.

It echoes and answers Nadaud's verses, and was written "To One Who Went To Carcassonne":

I can scarce believe the tale
Borne to me on every gale!
You have been to Carcassonne?
Looked its stately towers upon?
Trod its streets where, blithe and gay,
Knights and dames in bright array
Loitered in the evening glow,
When "two Generals," proud as they,
Gave "the Bishop" right of way?

Ah, the Cité on its hill!
Did you climb with right good will
Up the heights where banners fly
Red and gold against the sky?
Did the lofty ramparts gleam
Like the pageants of a dream?
Battlements and bastions soar
Like great mountains high and hoar,
While from azure sky the sun
Shone on mighty Carcassonne?

Carcassonne is not a myth—
Just a name to conjure with?
Figment of a poet's brain,
Child of his own joy and pain?
Do men *live* in Carcassonne—
Love and labor, strive and die?
Pray vain prayers for bliss unwon,
Lift pale faces to the sky?
In its streets do children play,
Laughing, shouting all the day?

You have been to Carcassonne.
Then for you the goal is won,
You have grasped the unattained,
What we longed for you have gained.
All men go to Arcady,
Soon or late they breathe its air,
Learn its language, pray its prayer,
Linger there till dreams are done,—
Yet—few go to Carcassonne!

No one is sure when or by whom Carcassonne was founded. In the Middle Ages it was the custom to attribute its origin to Æneas son of Anchises, and in feudal times it was attributed to Carcas, Queen Esther's eunuch. With more scientific support it has also been attributed to the Phœnicians. Whoever may have founded the city, however, archeologists have unearthed, outside, but near the walls, remains which give definite assurance that this hill has been a human habitation from the very earliest times. Pliny mentioned it as a stronghold of the Gauls from whom it passed to Romans, to Visigoths, to Saracens, to Franks, to the feudal dynasties, and finally came into the kingdom of France in the thirteenth century. Each of these controls, with the possible exception of the Saracens, whose stay was shorter than any of the others, left its characteristic impress in the masonry of the fortifications.

In its completed state it was considered impregnable to all enemies but two, treason and famine. It undoubtedly owed its origin to the value of its site, on a hill at the opening of the valley of the Aude, as a strategic defense against the enemy who might come down from the mountains on the south. When, in 1659, the frontier of France was moved double its former distance from this point, to the crest of the Pyrenees, the usefulness of Carcassonne as a stronghold passed. And it was well so, for, with the advent of gunpowder and heavy ordnance, the walls and towers that were invincible to arrows, axes,

ladders, battering-rams, and every other early military offensive, would have crumbled from their proud estate. The defenses were left to deteriorate and the château was debased to the uses of a storehouse and later of barracks. The Second Republic ordered the whole place destroyed in 1850. Thanks, however, to a vigorous campaign by J. P. Cros-Mayrevielle, this glorious monument was not only spared but its restoration went forward under the masterly direction of Viollet-le-Duc.

From the bridge one sees the western length of the old city. The outer wall rises in a varying line in conformity with the contour of the hill. Behind it, and at what seems to be twice its height, rises the inner wall. From end to end, at irregular intervals, from both walls, rise round towers which project beyond the lines of the walls to command their outer surfaces. From the heavy architectural masses which rise within the double barrier one distinguishes at the right the watch turrets of the Cathedral of St. Nazaire and nearer the center the battlements and towers of the château. Heavy and massive and somber as this agglomeration of masonry undoubtedly is, still the lights and shadows on the vast broken surfaces, the square-scalloped tops of the walls, and the tapering conical tops of the towers looking like a flight of giant candle-snuffers, give it the lightness and grace of fancy.

It is only by considering the details with somewhat exact figures, that one arrives at an idea of what this

fortification was like. The ground plan of the city is in outline an irregular oval, curved at the north end and pointed at the south. The circumference of the outer wall is nearly one mile, that of the inner wall is about four-fifths of a mile. The space between the walls varies from twenty-three to twenty-six feet, and here the tournaments and jousts were held. The outer wall is interrupted at varying intervals by the bellying fronts of sixteen towers and barbicans, which sometimes rise one hundred feet above the ground. Above the inner wall rise thirty other towers. The fortified château contributes six additional towers to the entire picturesque cluster.

In all this mile of outer wall there are only four openings, two *portes,* or gates, and two *poternes,* or posterns. There are four openings in the inner wall corresponding to these, and one additional gate (Porte de Bourg) which served the intramural space. Only one of the gates in each wall is accessible to horses and wheeled vehicles. The posterns are actually so low and narrow as to admit only men on foot, and one man at a time.

The outer gates are the Porte Narbonnaise, whose name quite obviously fixes it on the east side, in the direction of the city of Narbonne, and the Porte d'Aude, whose approach rises from the banks of the river of the same name. The Porte Narbonnaise, the larger entrance, is really a series of three low arches, surrounded and defended by its frowning fortified towers, a barbi-

can and two drawbridges. It is the gate of state, under which passed the royal processions, the knightly cavalcades, and grim groups of armored warriors when the business was forage or fight. The Porte d'Aude seems less formal but it is not less secure. We made our approach this way, up the cobbles of the long ramp which doubles on itself and finally reaches the inner gate through stepped passages, thrice arched over, along whose entire length the approach is exposed to attack from the protected positions along the walls and towers. But it is now a gradual friendly walk, and, as one passes the women and girls of the old city bearing their linens to and from the waters of the river, one visions such a chattering clattering procession of dames down all the ages since first fabled Carcas gave her name to the habitations on this hill.

The circuit of the outer wall introduces one to nearly all the variations in architecture from the first to the fourteenth century. The towers here are, however, merely strategic, offensive and defensive. The towers along the inner wall are more interesting because, in addition to their military character, they each played a different part in the life of the city, for it must be understood that this enclosure is no mere fortification, not alone a castle with its protections, but a town of houses and shops, streets and alleys, as well as castle and cathedral. To give the names of many of the towers is to indicate their non-military character as for instance: the

Tower of the Treasury, the Tower of the Constable's Mill, the Tower of Aver's Mill, the Tower of the Chapel which was attached to and accessible to the castle, the Tower of Justice, the Tower of the Prisons, the Tower of the Southern Mill, the Round Tower of the Bishop and the adjacent Square Tower of the Bishop.

Of the precise details of architecture and of the military significance, which multiply at every step, it was not for the casual visitor, more than for the casual reader, to grasp. One does grasp, however, that the walls were devoted first to impenetrability and unscalability, and secondly to providing every conceivable angle of vantage from which to hurl destruction. One somehow visualizes the enemy flinging iron fire baskets over the walls into the city, and driving their battering rams against the walls their ladders are powerless to scale, while the defenders on the broad crenelated ramparts are moving freely and quickly to the points of concentrated attack; the archers and bowmen, behind the narrow loop-holes in the towers, picking their victims in the open below; and the citizenry in the emergency rallying to the ramparts and assailing the enemy with scalding water, hot pitch, melted lead, boiling oil and the very stones of their houses. And inside the gate-towers one marvels at the ingenuity of engineer and mason who devised open shafts and concealed portcullis so that if and when perchance the enemy below had gained the tower the defenders above let fall the doors, imprisoning the

intruders, and holding them at the mercy of more hot pitch, melted lead, boiling oil and mighty stones, down the great open interior shaft.

A little woman near me shuddered, and muttered something decisive about the Dark Ages. Perhaps they were dark and ignorant and retail, they knew nothing of machine guns and bomb-planes and gassing. We have vastly wholesaled the means of human slaughter, but engineering has not advanced in a thousand years on the method of masonry and the use of stone as employed in the walls and towers of Carcassonne.

The business of seeing the intricacies of it all and trying to understand the significance of all that the deft engineers of several races and many eras had put into it, was not without its lighter and slightly irrelevant diversion. However many foolish questions of one's own one stifles, one can not remain long in the company of sightseers and not find amusement in the curiosity—the curious curiosity—of others. I remember that at the time many things amused us, but we restrained our smiles with merely the exchange of a knowing glance. But in setting those same questions and comments out here they seem without the same flavor.

There was another diversion on these heights, however, which no one, who ever sees, can help wishing to share, and that is the encircling panorama of the valley of the winding Aude. There was beauty in every direction. It was, however, the outlook to the south that held

us. There the first foot-hills of the Pyrenees, which had come nearer and nearer as we approached obliquely down the valley from Toulouse, were just beyond the walls. But the mountains behind them, although they revealed somewhat definite outlines, and the shaded coloring of receding summits, were as yet far away; far enough to be wrapped in a mist which suggested to the eye the mystery they still held for the imagination.

Descending from the walls into the town, we crossed the bridged moat, and entered the château, whose towered walls give it the appearance of another smaller walled city within the larger. It lags a little in its restorations, and its great halls are as bare as the tight little passages in the towers. Here one should rather close the eye to the actual and conjure, if one can, the brave days when the Trencavels rejoiced in the completion of this castle, and made it rich in rugs and tapestries and great tables; when it swarmed with knightly men and noble ladies, troubadours and their jongleurs, while torches and trenchards were ordered, and the beautiful Adelaide de Trencavel, tradition says, created here her Court of Love. But if the imagination is unequal to covering up the bleakness of its empty halls, there is still, a moment's stroll through the narrowest of streets—nothing is far away in this tightly built old town—the Cathedral of St. Nazaire. No imagination is needed there.

We enter into a severe Roman nave, whose shadows are accented by the sight beyond. Across the end there

is a Gothic transept, a vibrant substitute for a celestial vision. It was begun by that Louis of France who was saint as well as king. It was this same Louis who built the Sainte Chapelle in Paris. A kinship between the two churches is immediately apparent. Though the Sainte Chapelle is attributed to Montereau, the architect of the transept of St. Nazaire is not mentioned. Both buildings are petite and slender and high, and both have so little stone-work between the windows that they seem temples wholly of colored glass. In the Sainte Chapelle the panes are throughout of one pattern, and the tones are subdued and monotonous. In St. Nazaire the glass is radiant like that in the windows of the cathedral of Milan. The place is alive with tinted lights. At each end of the transept is an enormous rose window. The shallow apse behind the main altar frames five windows, and the connecting walls of the transept frame six more. It is as if that whole end of the church were paneled with huge transparent tapestries. Each of the windows is almost equally alluring as a work of art, although the more generally appealing subjects and the more ingenious assembly of incidents are found in those which depict the Life of Christ, the militant lives of St. Peter and St. Paul, the genealogical tree of the house of Jesse, and the Tree of Redemption.

The glass is the greater glory of St. Nazaire, but attention to the sculptured monuments and decorations reveals a recumbent alabaster effigy of an unidentified

bishop which would be notable if only for the miraculous restoration by Viollet-le-Duc; a monument to Bishop Rudolphe, in the erroneously called Leper's Chapel, of a delicacy which literally exemplifies "chiseled lace"; and the whimsies of a light-hearted medieval sculptor who made the little columns in the sanctuary. Each of these delicate columns is entirely conventional except for the grotesque figure which attaches itself to the capital of each one, and each of these fantastics is different from every other. They include animals, birds, reptiles, demons, a gay farmer distributing grain, a listening monk, an acolyte with censer, a sow suckling its brood, and a prisoner with ball and chain.

At first glance at the exterior there seems to be no reason why the gargoyles of Notre Dame should be more famous than those of St. Nazaire except for Victor Hugo's publicity. Here the grimacing monsters reach out in defiant protection of the human visages which appear along the cornice. Some comic, some sad, it is truly said of these faces that they reveal a subtle morbidness which the most incisive modern realism has not surpassed. It is said also that there are four hundred of these heads. Perhaps. I did not count them. To insist on a count seemed too much like subjecting fine art to collective bargaining.

All had been seen apparently. Yet all of Carcassonne has not been seen, not its most mysterious and impressive aspect, if one has not returned at night and descended

and circled the city in that narrow uneven space between the walls—for which there is no name in English, the French word is *lices*. With a cloud flecked sky and an inconstant moon the effect is breathlessly romantic. Without a moon one picks the way by the rays of a flickering lantern. The darkness exaggerates the shadowy corners, it multiplies the heights of walls and towers. The silence broods and gives the place a mood. In the mysterious beauty of the place and the night ages fall away. Through such a gorge Dante might have wandered in Purgatory. One listens, and would no more be surprised to hear the moans of prisoners in the donjon depths than the tinkle of a lute on the ramparts far above, and a troubadour chanting his song. Here lovers kept their trysts. Over these walls maidens let down ropes for amorous cavaliers to climb to bliss. In such a place unwelcome ones were found, their doublets damp and crimson, and a slash over the heart. One steps a little carefully even now. And when at last one leaves, it is not without relief, though glad to have seen Carcassonne at its best, its realest, under the lowered vizor of the night.

CHAPTER V

Roundabout Perpignan

AT THE FOOT OF THE PYRENEES—ROUSSILLON AND THE VERMILION COAST—CATALANS—A MODERN BABEL—WHEN SHEPHERDS SPOKE AND RIVERS ANSWERED—THE CAFÉS OF PERPIGNAN—PLACE DE LA LOGE—A FRENCHMAN'S CLUB—THE SWORD OF CHARLES V—THE TROUBADOUR'S HEART AND HIS LADY'S SUPPER—BRINGING THE RELICS TO PERPIGNAN—COASTWISE TOWARD SPAIN—THE PATH OF HANNIBAL—WHERE THE PYRENEES BEGIN.

The last stretch of coast along the quiet Mediterranean north of Cap Cerbère, where the Pyrenees rise out of the great inland sea, and Spain begins, the French call the Côte Vermeille, the Vermilion Coast. Farther east, along the same sea, they celebrate the cloudless skies in the more familiar name of the Côte d'Azur. Their Norman coast, where the clouds are low, and the channel rains and mists give fields and orchards a vivid green, they call the Côte d'Emeraude. Where the Pyrenees descend into the waters of the Atlantic and the breakers wreathe the beaches in long plumes of silver, the coast is called the Côte d'Argent.

Though the names for the Azure, Emerald and Silver coasts are quite obvious, it seems open to question why this stretch of Mediterranean, to which we are now com-

ing, should be called Vermilion. It would put a truthless limitation on the infinite coloring of the rocks and range to pretend that the Vermilion Coast has taken its name from them. Likewise does the name limit thus the coast so named to the few French miles, fifteen in all, next the Spanish border, for north of them the land flattens to the sea level and shortly disappears irregularly in a series of vast salt-water ponds, so that it is not always obvious to the sentimental traveler whether to melt at the prospect, lest the tear meant for the Mediterranean drop a little ignobly in a pond.

It is not the coast which is interesting here, save along the last rocky reach from Collioure to Spain. The interest is nearly all behind it. This corner of France, which lies in the angle of the sea and the mountaintops on the Spanish frontier, is known on modern maps as the Department of Pyrénées Orientales. One seldom hears the name, however. Historically and in the hearts and on the lips of the people it is still old Roussillon. They cling to that name to-day in spite of all the designs of the name-changing period following the Revolution, when the makers of the new France wiped it out along with other old names in the effort to make the elements in France's melting-pot forget their feudal, royal and religious antecedents.

One hears little from the people of this corner of France of their being French. Generally they tell you that they are Catalan, a name which is more than an echo

of that province of Catalonia of Spain which nestles along the same coast, but on the southern slope of the Pyrenees. Once all this coastwise territory on both sides of the mountains was Catalonia, united and independent, with its own language, literature and traditions. There came a time, however, when the jealous powers, elsewhere separated by the same range, had bargained; expediency drew a line through the heart of the Catalans' country; and their mountains, which had united them, became a barrier which divided them. The Catalans of Roussillon have been French only since the treaty of 1659. Less than three hundred years is too short a time in these parts to change the slow work of thrice as many centuries.

Similarly, at the west end of the range, along the Atlantic littoral, the land of the Basques lay in the way of that same new French and Spanish boundary, and that sturdy people, whose beginnings are so ancient that they are lost in the misty ages when history got itself but indifferently recorded, discovered that those of them who lived on the northern slopes of the Pyrenees were French, and those on the southern were Spanish. But for Catalan or Basque tradition has proved as strong as a treaty. Politically French and politically Spanish, each of these races has survived as a vigorous individual racial unit, each around its own mountainsides.

Roussillon and the Vermilion Coast are quite untouched by tourists. It has not served any one's purpose

to exploit them. They lie along the railway to and from Barcelona, but who goes to Barcelona? Few enough tourists. Even the human currents in the steel troughs across southern France, between the Riviera and Toulouse and Pau and Biarritz, drift by its northern border as unconscious of Roussillon as Roussillon seems to be of it or, for that matter, of all the rest of the world. Let any Thomas who doubts this isolation step round the corner to his favorite tourist agent and inquire how to get to Roussillon and the Côte Vermeille, to Perpignan, Elne or Collioure. They are not in his bright lexicon. So any one wishing to see a people and a civilization as old as any in western Europe, unspoiled by contact with a more cosmopolitan influence, may feel reasonably sure of finding them here, under the shelter of the Eastern Pyrenees.

We were not many miles deep in Roussillon when the distinction between French and Catalan began to attract the eye and the ear. The eye caught the more obvious externals of dress. Here, as in Spain, the women are almost invariably in black. The older women wear a square black opaque kerchief over their heads, and knot the ends under their chins. The younger women wear the Catalan headdress of lace (*la coiffe dentelle*). This is a sack which gathers the hair, but it is in some way spread and held out in a circle, crisp and fine. What one seldom sees here on a woman's head, and does not miss, is a hat or a bonnet. The boys and the men of the labor-

Vernet-les-Bains. Winding ways in the Old Town

St-Martin-du-Canigou above Vernet-les-Bains

ing class, like their cousins throughout the Pyrenean country, in general wear the Basque cap (*beret Basque*), made of black or dark blue cloth, frequently velvet, and in shape a modified tam-o'-shanter. The faces underneath take on the Spanish characteristics, long and narrow, with black eyes and hair, and a russet or olive complexion. The men's trousers are tight in the thigh, spreading below the knees, and at the top they reach half way between the waist-line and the armpits. Vests are thus superfluous. They are almost unknown.

The eye being quicker than the ear, we understood most of what we saw, but less and less of what we heard. Our English had gradually lost its value back in Toulouse and Carcassonne. Here, if it was not a dead language, it might at least be rated as locally non-existent. Soon even our treasured scraps of French lost currency. We didn't speak "their" French. Our ears carefully tuned to Parisian tones, heard only strange accents. A word came through occasionally but, for all we understood, we were gradually growing deaf.

I made a list of the lingual variants one hears in Roussillon. At the top is French, pure French, but, as at the top of a pyramid, it stands at the vanishing point. At the broad base, supporting the whole structure, is Catalan. Between these two extremes one hears Spanish, French with a Spanish accent, French with a Catalan accent, Spanish with a Catalan accent, Spanish with a French accent, Catalan with a Spanish accent, Catalan

with a French accent. There may have been others, but from these it will be seen that for easy communication, the advantage all lies with being born here and growing up with the languages.

There are Catalan as well as French newspapers in Perpignan. One of them, a weekly called *L'Eveil,* (*The Call,*) is outspoken in its advocacy of the Catalan renaissance, not merely literary but political. It preaches secession from France and reunion with Catalonia in Spain, as in the days before the division by the treaty of 1659. There is also a considerable circulation in Roussillon for the Catalan language newspapers and periodicals of Barcelona. The Roussillonnais use French only where legally required—in schools, in church and in court. In the streets, in the cafés, at work, and in their domestic life, they all speak Catalan.

There is of course a Catalan flag. The field is yellow with four diagonal red bars. Its origin is attributed to a Catalan hero who, wounded to the death for his country, dipped his four fingers in his own blood, drew them across his yellow scarf, and offered it to his compatriots as a standard. The tricolor of France is the only flag one sees in Roussillon, but the Catalan colors and device are slyly introduced in buttons worn in the coat-lapel, as a decoration for automobile radiator-caps, as the insignia of athletic teams, and in various other unofficial fashions. I found the device used in aluminum emergency coins issued by the Chamber of Commerce of Per-

pignan. In spite of this marked Catalan sentiment it is not to be believed that the Roussillonnais are not loyal to France. Not only did their contribution in men and money to the late war prove that, but the first outstanding popular French leader, Marshal Joffre, is a Catalan of Roussillon. His birthplace was pointed out as we passed through the village of Rivesaltes, on the way to Perpignan and only five miles distant from it.

No one told us to go to Perpignan. No one seemed to know what might be interesting where France is farthest south. The *légionnaire's* enthusiasm had flamed for Toulouse as an approach, and after that for the whole range without preference. Carcassonne was inevitable, and, after Carcassonne, Perpignan seemed the only way. Conventional travelers rarely venture south of the old walled city, and imagination, at least the imagination which directs nomads in search of those things which should interest, was apparently not equal to anything beyond. But surely it was no ill luck that put us down there.

Perpignan is the metropolis of Roussillon. Not that forty thousand souls constitute a metropolis, but that here focuses all the historical, commercial and official life of the ancient area which it is so difficult to call Pyrénées Orientales, and that here is the heart of all things Catalan this side of Spain. If one considers its position it seems hesitant and unresolved between the cool gray mountains and the warm blue sea, close to both, yet not

quite attached to one or other. It is after having climbed the heights where the citadel stands one realizes that here was a lookout, a sallying point, and a defense, which embraced all eastern routes out of Spain. This command of the route is generally the key to the location of the cities and towns and castles all along the Pyrenees.

History seems not to have busied itself with the beginnings of Perpignan. It has left that to legend, and legend has been active. More than one explanation is given of the origin of the city and of its name. The one given here, in spite of the fact that it ignores the strategic position of the citadel, is favored because it bravely and imaginatively reaches back to the days when legends may best be believed to have begun, in that morning twilight of human experience when men spoke and rivers answered.

In those days there lived high up in the mountains, in a village near the source of the River Tet, a man who called himself, in Catalan, Père Pinya. Bored by the sad monotonous existence of a herdsman up among the peaks, Père decided to fare forth, in search of a new home. So one spring day when the snow had melted and hope and energy were in the air, he came down the mountainsides from his high pastures to the banks of the Tet and addressed the sprightly little river somewhat in these terms:

"Oh, thou, who descends every day to the far off sunny plains, guide me, for I would fain go there, too."

"Follow me," answered the Tet, "and I'll show thee the way."

So Père drove forward the oxen which drew his cart, following the lead of the winding bounding torrent. It led him out of the mountains, to an open plain near the sea, to a place where two hillocks rose near its banks. Then said the river:

"Stop here. Labor and cultivate the earth, and I will water thy fields."

And here Père Pinya halted. His oxen broke a furrow and he builded him a house. About his house rose a village, and his furrow became a moat, and about them rose a wall, and the home of Père Pinya is said to have become the city of Perpignan.

Except for the heights where the citadel stands Perpignan is in two dimensions only, length and breadth. Yet with modest expectation one will look far for a gayer, busier, trimmer, more self-sufficient or picturesque little city. It stands aside as the River Tet rolls by on its way from distant Mont Carlitte to the near-by sea; but it straddles the smaller Basse, platforms it, and on the platform builds an airy café, which is one of the centers of the town's gaiety. Like all southern cities Perpignan lives on its pavements, but it makes that form of life seem more alluring here by music which is better than good, better than any other we heard all along the range.

The café above the river is alongside the square

which opens for the statue of François Arago, and takes its name from that great French scientist who was born in the neighboring mountains. When other prospects cease to please, one may return here and so select a table as to look through an opening, made by the River Basse approaching between the trees, straight up where Mont Canigou lines its silhouette against the sky. This peak dominates not only Perpignan but all Roussillon. Though not the highest crest in the Pyrenees it is detached from the range, a solitary summit, and seen from the sea level, as it is at Perpignan, every one of its 9,135 feet counts.

The shady Quai Sadi Carnot, along the Basse, leads to other cafés and more music, in the neighborhood of the picturesque Castillet and gate of Notre Dame, both of brick, sole survivors of the medieval walls of Perpignan, and much petted by local pride. On this side the city is bounded by an almost continual line of shady parks, the playground where the *bonnes* come with the babies by day, and the more sentimental at other hours. Such activities may not distinguish Perpignan from other places, but the Promenade des Platanes does. One will go beyond France to find trees of such majestic height as this triple row of near relatives of the American sycamore. In deforested Europe the platanes of Perpignan loom in native eyes as large comparatively as do the red-woods of California in American eyes.

There is one other group of cafés here, and it lures

us through narrow twisting streets to the very heart of Perpignan, to the Place de la Loge. This little widening between old houses is not far from anywhere, yet after constant effort to locate it I was never sure of my way there, and usually arrived unexpectedly as if it ought to be somewhere else, and not without a suspicion that it probably would be next time. The width of the Place de la Loge is not much more than sixty feet between houses. All the way along, the tables creep out on each side to within a mere footpath of each other. Where one café leaves off and another begins would be hard to fix, if it were not for the varying colors of the little tables and chairs and the awnings. When the sun is high, strong collapsible arms reach these gay striped awnings out from each side, and the space between is pieced with a very thin strip of blue sky.

In the tempered light beneath all is intimate as in a club. The Place de la Loge is indeed the nearest approach to a club in Perpignan, or as near as the Latin usually approaches to this more essentially English and American institution. Its cafés are distinguished from the others as being men's rendezvous. A single liqueur or coffee maintains a welcome by the hour. Here the files of the newspapers are pored over, letters are written, business is discussed, the dominoes clink, the cards are shuffled, and rarely indeed here does one discover a wholly idle lounger.

The little Place takes its name from the Loge de la

Mer, an exquisite little building on the corner, begun in 1307, which introduced the first Italian Renaissance into these parts. Its purpose is indicated by its name. But lest the name be not known, or its significance, those who ran, whether they read or not, have for long been reminded that this is the Maritime Court by a delicate little metal ship in full sail held up against the sky at the corner of the ornate cornice. Next to the Loge is the Hotel de Ville, through whose two broad arches is seen the cool shadowy courtyard, as if one were peering straight into Italy. Above the arches, however, the wall brings us sharply back to southern France, for it is laid in those characteristic alternating courses of tilted thin brick edges and of round field stones embedded in cement. Three gilded hands and their forearms project from the wall in some inscrutable gesture. One sees this sort of thing in Perpignan. At a sharp angle of the bastions of the Citadel, where it resembles the prow of a mighty ship, something like the château of Mauleon in another part of the Pyrenees, an arm reaches out from the masonry and holds aloft a gleaming sword, called "the sword of Charles V." That monarch had a part in building this fortification, but no one I met in Perpignan could tell what significance attaches to the gesture with which the mailed fist holds the sword of the emperor over their city to-day. The sword on the Citadel and the three gilded hands in the Place de la Loge are none the less arresting because they stimulate questions that

aren't answered. It is no sure thing that the best part of a good riddle is the answer. The Sphinx is still doing well as an object of interest. Mystery has not yet been stripped of its fascination.

Next, however, to the unanswered riddle is its flattering cousin which permits us readily to guess its answer. That sort of delight is offered nearly everywhere else in unexploited Perpignan. Without a promise, without competing with older, greater, better known repositories of interest, yet ingenuously, it yields the romance of snooking about and, better still, the exhilaration of discovering.

Unprepared for the overwhelming remnant in the massive Castillet, or the graceful façades in the Place de la Loge, one comes, with an equally pleasant interest, upon the four primitive inscrutable caryatids embedded in the face of the gate of the Citadel; upon unfamiliar canvases of Corregio, Rubens, Ribera and Van Dyke in a gallery for which no loud voice has been raised; upon the ethereal wrought-iron belfry which holds the cathedral bell silhouetted in its delicate tracery against the clouds as if a part of a pattern of lace. And the town is so unostentatious, so little self-conscious. All these beauties are a part of its own every-day life, not existing, as often elsewhere, for the visitors only, or more especially for the guides. Here places and things just happen, round a corner, beyond a bend, casually and delightfully.

In another of those unexpected pockets like that of the Loge, one happens upon a little market square with all the congested color and character and animation of the south. Just beyond one stumbles upon a tiny place dedicated, by name and monument, to Hyacinthe Rigaud, who went from Perpignan to Paris in the days of Louis XIV and Louis XV and painted apparently a majority of the men of title a cubit above insignificance in his lifetime. Another turn or two and the Cathedral of St. Jean blocks the way. Its nave has an imposing vastness unbroken by columns, and its decorations bring nearer the art and atmosphere of Spain. It was disappointing not to find the tombs of Guillem de Capestang and the Lady Margarida de Rossilho, whose love story is one of the most famous of troubadour days, but in the more ancient and cavernous and many tapered chapel of Notre Dame de Correch, we found the collection of relics, some of which, over three hundred years ago, came from Elne with such pious splendor, and at least one other from St. Martin de Canigou with a somewhat more militant incident.

Guillem de Capestang was a troubadour of the fourteenth century. Margarida was the wife of Sir Raimon of the Château de Rossilho (Roussillon), whose graceful tower remains above a motley array of houses on its little hill in the plain, not three miles out of Perpignan, on the road to Canet and the sea. Guillem, son of a poor knight, came to the court of Rossilho and offered to re-

main as a vassal. "Sir Raimon found him to be of fair and good countenance," says the old Provençal manuscript, "bade him welcome, and Guillem remained with him, and so gentle was his demeanor that young and old loved him well." The Lady Margarida, on her part, was "the most beautiful lady, as you know, of that time, and the most prized for all that is praiseworthy, and noble, and courteous."

The troubadour and the Lady Margarida soon kindled to their daily contact, and he "henceforth became a servant to Love, and began to invent stanzas graceful and gay, and tunes and canzos, and his songs found favor with all, but most with her for whom he sang." These songs eventually betrayed their secret and gossips took their talk to the ear of Sir Raimon, who finally had the proof of his wife's infidelity from the troubadour himself. He curbed the fury of his anger, "to poison the sting of his revenge." Coming upon Guillem in a lonely place, he slew him, severed his head, and tore out his heart. Then he returned to his castle, and had the troubadour's heart roasted and served to his wife at dinner. After she had eaten it, he produced the poet's gory head, and disclosed his own ghastly revenge, telling his Lady that it was her lover's heart which she had just eaten. Her answer was as simple as it was tragic: "It was so good and savory, that never other meat or drink shall take from my mouth the sweetness which the heart of Guillem has left there." Sir Raimon furious, rushed at

her with his sword in hand, but she eluded him and threw herself from a balcony to death.

Then "all the friends of Guillem and the lady, and all the courteous knights of the neighborhood, and all those who were lovers, united to make war on Sir Raimon." The attack was led by Alfonso, King of Aragon, himself. Raimon's castle was taken from him and he was made a prisoner unto death. The bodies of the two lovers were brought solemnly to Perpignan and buried at the Cathedral. And there was a time, continues the chronicle, when all the knights thereabouts "kept the day of their death every year; and all the fond lovers and all the fond lady-loves prayed for their souls."

As for the transfer of the relics, those from Elne were brought up in the spring of the year 1602, when the episcopal seat was moved from the decaying town, down the coast, up to the capital. It was made the occasion for a procession of great splendor, but, what is more significant, the transfer was accomplished peacefully and it was followed by a mighty celebration throughout the city. Perhaps it was the peacefulness of the transfer that they celebrated for it was not always so in these parts. A few years later the civic authorities sent a syndic and other delegates up into the mountains, to the Abbey of St. Martin of Canigou, to bring back the relics of St. Gaudérique. The aid of this saint was invoked with much confidence to terminate the droughts so prevalent in this province. But it must have been a dry sea-

son about Vernet-en-Conflens, now Vernet-les-Bains, for, when the pious procession passed that way, the villagers came out, arrested the clergy and the syndic, seized the relics, and put them in their own church. This was only the beginning. The news of this high-handed proceeding produced a lively resentment in neighboring Villefranche, and its villagers marched up to Vernet, captured relics and officials, and carried them back to their church. Couriers soon brought word of these outrages down to Perpignan where it created a sensation. A host rode forth, with banners and cannon, and began an attack on Villefranche. The besieged were not equal to the assault and surrendered the syndic, the clergy and the relics, whereupon the progress down to the cathedral was resumed and completed without further incident, and the bones of the good rain-maker have reposed there peacefully ever since.

Resting in the devotional atmosphere of this church it was easier to visualize the fate of the troubadour and the battle of the relics than to realize that comparatively recently, in the days of the Revolution, when the Paris mobs stormed their Notre Dame and enthroned a harlot on its altar, the same drama was imitated here in Perpignan, and the local mob possessed St. Jean and on its altar offered incense to its own local Goddess of Reason.

It is indicative of the interests in this corner of France that though we came to Perpignan only to enter the mountains, and Canigou reminded and beckoned us

half a dozen times a day, yet each morning the departure was put off till the next, and with never a regret at night. Some of these days were given to journeys down the coast toward Spain. With proper advice and a motor-car, this may be done in a day, but leisure and lounging are more in the spirit of the soft air, of the quiet old towns, and of the dissolving pictures of sea and mountains held in each other's embrace. Here one feels again the cosmopolitanism of the Mediterranean. Nature is constant on all her shores. Here one is not more west than east in the presence of the orchards of golden oranges, the clumps of slender bamboo, the groves of silver-gray olive trees, the well ordered vineyards terraced toward the sky; dogs, pigs, chickens and drowsy donkeys adding to the confusion and picturesqueness of every village; ignorance, poverty and dirt discounted, and made somehow enviable, by strong bodies and bright eyes, chatter and singing and laughter. It might be Italy or Greece or Spain as well as France.

The way south leads first to Elne in the plain and then on to Argelès-sur-Mer, which is a misnomer by nearly two miles, and thence to Collioure, Port-Vendres and Banyuls. Elne is a mere handful of quaint old houses roundabout the former cathedral of St. Eulalie, attached to which survives one of the most beautiful cloisters in France. Aside from this Elne is all in the past, a past which reaches to mythological days and lies buried in the ruins of successive cities, layers deep under

the dust and rock of the village which suns itself to-day. As ancient Illiberis it was a metropolis before the Romans came to Gaul. In Pliny's time its glories were already a tradition. Hannibal came this way after his march across the Pyrenees, through the passes a few miles up the valley of the River Tech, in 218 B. C. He marched his army of fifty-nine thousand men through its streets, they were quartered on the old town, where now magnolia and oleander bloom, and ilex groves are old upon the slopes. The spot is of even more intimate and particular importance to this narrative, however, because here, first, on these shores, appeared the name which has survived as the name of the whole range. If Elne stands upon the buried ruins of Illiberis, beneath those ruins are other fragments once named Pyrénée, for a princess first beloved, and then abandoned, by Hercules.

Beyond Elne the Tech comes down from the first heights of the Pyrenees, where are mountain towns well worth a visit by any one not entering elsewhere. But our way pressed on, across the last stretch of the plain of Roussillon until it expires where the mountains meet the sea beyond Argelès. Thence the way is over the rocks to Collioure rising sheer from the sea, a lovely picture of sails, walls, battlements, and towers, against a background of mountains. A few miles farther Port-Vendres, anciently the Port of Venus, sleeps drowsily upon its rocks, to be awakened once or twice a week by the arrival

of a ship from Marseilles or Algiers. Beyond, Banyuls achieves a beach, and some modernity. France finally surrenders the coast to Spain at Cap Cerbère, a long lonely rock rising sheer from the sea, the actual eastern end of the Pyrenees.

CHAPTER VI

Climbing up to Spain

ENTERING THE MOUNTAINS—VALLEY OF THE RIVER TET—A BARNYARD IN A BASILICA—THE RAGGED MONK OF ST. MICHAEL'S—VERNET-LES-BAINS—CANIGOU THE UNESCAPABLE—CLIMBING TO THE ABBEY OF ST. MARTIN—EMBROIDERED BELLS—PLAYING POSTIE FOR THE BISHOP—SIGHTS UNSEEN—THE BRIDGE SÉJOURNÉ BUILT—VAUBAN IN THE PYRENEES—THE COLDEST TOWN IN FRANCE—THE CERDAGNE VALLEY FROM FONT-ROMEU—FRANCE AND SPAIN IN A SINGLE PICTURE.

After much restraint but with ample compensation, after weeks of approaching the Pyrenees, and watching them restlessly from varying distances, the day came when we entered in.

The favored gateway from the east is up from Perpignan, through the valley of the River Tet. There is also a railway up the valley of the Tech toward Amélie-les-Bains and thence one may motor over the low pass of Fourton to the Tet. This detour through the foothills is not without beauty and interest, but it offers nothing distinctive, nothing that is not equaled elsewhere in any of its attractions. There is another entrance from Carcassonne, up the valley of the Aude, by rail as far as Axat, and then over the Quillane Pass to Mont Louis. Fine as is this route, one enters here, however, at the ex-

pense of missing Perpignan, the Mediterranean coast, and the climb up the wild valley of the Tet.

The especial objectives of the trip up the Tet were the ninth century Abbey of St-Michael-de-Cuxa near Prades, the watering place of Vernet-les-Bains, the Abbey of St-Martin-de-Canigou, the Carença Gorges, the so-called triangular Saracen church of La Mesquita at Planès, Vauban's fortifications at Villefranche and Mont Louis, and the elevated frontier valley of the Cerdagne.

This program was suggested by the office of the Syndicat d'Initiative. Travelers in France can not do better than seek information where they see its sign, and it may be found in all the historic towns and the watering places. Touring has the especial attention of the government of the Republic, and all the Syndicats d'Initiative are under the central control of the Office National de Tourisme, in Paris. The little offices of the Syndicats d'Initiative are independent of all transportation companies or agencies, and they sell no tickets. Each one will be found, as a rule, under the control of one of the intelligent citizens in the locality, the advice is disinterested and gratis, and it extends beyond the mechanism of routes and time-tables to exceptional information about everything a traveler wants to know, or should know, from hotels to history inclusive.

The train out of Perpignan points straight for Mont Canigou. It follows the meanderings of the Tet through orchards of almonds and peaches, through vineyards

which yield the grapes for the celebrated Roussillon wines, gradually veering to one side so that passengers on the left side of the train have the favored view of the peak. Coal and smoke and cinders have been left behind. The power which lifted us toward the high places was electric. The currents came down from the mighty waters of the upper gorges as if the mountains were sending out this helping welcoming hand to draw us to them. As the train speeds along there seems no way ahead except perpendicularly up the peak. But as the plain tilts and the train climbs toward the dark mountainsides, the valley gradually opens and receives us. Almost as quickly as it takes to tell of it, the advancing spurs cut off the plains on the left, then on the right, and, with a final curve of the supple river, the rocky barricade closed in behind. The arms of green and brown enfolded us. At last we were in the mountains, in the Pyrenees.

The outlook is more picturesque than rugged in the first rises of the valley. In spite of the sizzling summer heat on the seashore and not yet entirely left behind us, there are patches of snow in sight in the crevices near the mountaintop. The foot-hills fall back with easy ascents, giving glorified background to huddled villages nearer to the sky than to the water, an occasional ruined château, a lonely crumbling watch-tower, and dark low chapels behind square Roman belfries.

Even here, though more especially beyond, throughout the whole range, one is struck by the high isolated

villages in apparently inaccessible places. How did they get there? Why were they put there? Why does any one live there? Living there, how does any one support himself? The towers, some round, some square, some crumbling specters of their former selves, are also part of every valley picture in the Pyrenees. They are survivors, like the desolated châteaux, of the Middle Ages when the robber barons descended on the valleys. Then the signal went forth from the towers and the lords led their people out to rout the invader or draw them into the châteaux and gave them the protection of their walls. As for chapels and shrines and hermitages, they, too, seem to be constantly in sight. A dealer in numerals lists thirty-five hermitages in Roussillon alone. And they all—towers, châteaux, chapels—seem to date back into the dim days of the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries. The masons appear to have had slack times in these mountains for the past nine or ten hundred years.

To reach the Abbey of St-Michael-de-Cuxa we left the train at the town of Prades. It hides back in the hills a half hour's walk from the town, a walk over a gentle grade, much to be recommended. But that is more than can be said for the Abbey, or what remains of it. Possibly expectation ran too high. That is a common misfortune in travel. At any rate a fine Romanesque tower, with pyramidal base and arched and pillared windows to its crenellated top, in a graceful state of survival and decay, was practically all there was to suggest the glory of

The high valley of the French Cerdagne
The distant peaks are in Spain; in the foreground is the Hermitage

Seo de Urgel, on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees

the monastery which was already famed in the tenth century. Among its traditions is one which says that within its walls Pietro Orseolo, doge of Venice, passed away in 987, "in the odor of sanctity." We felt it a perfectly legitimate source of surprise that the good Pietro could not have found near home an equally pious odor in which to expire.

The elements and the animals have long since possessed this venerable sanctuary. The abbey church is roofed largely by the blue sky. We climbed into the ruin over crumbling masonry and found weeds growing in the recesses of the little chapels, chickens pecking at the earthen floor, a load of hay and munching asses where once the altar stood. A barnyard in a basilica. It was a little grotesque and a little sad, and we might have felt the pilgrimage a failure if it had not been for the lay brother who attends the pots and pans and, no doubt, serves the mass, for the parish priest near by. This modest monk was a pathetic figure of rags and patches, as if the remnants of the habits of all the dead and gone monks of St. Michael's had contributed to make a gown and scapular and cowl for him. He did the honors of the ruins, of which he seemed so much a part, and at great length told us very little, but with a modest graciousness which left us much in his debt.

I came away from St. Michael's a bit apprehensive of what other disappointments might lie ahead. The walk back to Prades and a half hour on the train dulled the

edge of any regret and had us forward-looking again. At Villefranche we should have visited the fortifications and the old houses, of every century and style it is said, and a ruined tower beckoned from above the town. But instead we took places in the motor-bus for Vernet-les-Bains, with twice as many passengers as it would comfortably hold, boxes of fish and meat lashed to the running-board, and the roof piled with other freight and luggage. For some time it looked as though we might not start, but a place was finally found for everything, and we rattled and pounded up south. Then it appeared as if we should not arrive. Three times the motor stalled, and three times it reluctantly allowed itself to be argued back into action by the mysterious Catalan mutterings of the sturdy chauffeur and what sounded like Catalan profanity from a rangy somebody who seemed to belong to the car, for he at least contented himself to ride by standing on the box of fish, all the way, clinging to the roof supports. It was a deal of bother for merely three miles. The other passengers took it in such good part that we could not do less, and we roared down the main street of little Vernet in excellent humor.

Vernet-les-Bains, as its name implies, is a watering-place, one of the several score in these mountains which bubble hot and healing springs at every turn. It calls itself the Paradise of the Pyrenees. If the claim is open to argument, at least the little town furnishes much support for its assumption. Many years ago Vernet was

visited by British royalty and ever since it has enjoyed the favor of English travelers, who come in considerable numbers to these mountains. The townspeople repeat a list of such patrons of their pretty resort, but it is easier to understand their pride than their pronunciation. However, out of some names which were offered in Catalan French, or maybe it was French Catalan, I guessed that among others Lord Roberts and Rudyard Kipling used to come here.

It has good hotels, a thermal establishment, an ambitious casino, a park which is none the less a surprise and a delight because it seems a semi-tropical imitation of the Parc Monceau, and sufficient altitude to abate the seaside heat considerably. It was my first experience of a Pyrenean watering-place. It seemed a sane place to go for rest and quiet and healing waters. But it requires a phlegmatic nature for one in health to be content there for long. There are livelier spas beyond.

The real charm of Vernet for the journeyman traveler is not among the hotels and the bathing houses, but rather at the other end of the little shady boulevard, where one climbs the stone lanes of the old town which covers what seems merely a high rock in this mountain-walled valley. The houses here rise one above the other with tiny terraces, each one of which is no larger than a good sized dining-room table, each one retained by a support of stone, and screened above by a vine-hung pergola. The winding lanes, the tinted walls of houses heaped on

houses, the dashes of color in clothes hung out of windows and in the flowers blooming everywhere, the scraps of song and the twang of guitars, the friendly silence or the cordial greeting of those whose privacy has been invaded, the old church at the top and the view which rewards from its terrace, all made Vernet in the twilight of a summer evening something very like an acceptable substitute for its claim.

The town nestles close to the foot of Mont Canigou. It is only by roaming about the plain of Roussillon, never out of sight of this peak, continually pursued by it, unable to escape it, and then traveling thirty miles directly toward it, up to an altitude of twenty-one hundred feet at its base, there to find it apparently higher and vaster than ever, that one begins to appreciate it. There is, indeed, a kind of coquetry with mountains. They lure us from a distance with a false closeness, and then recede as we approach. From afar they present themselves as soft and languorous, their shoulders wrapped in cloudy chiffons. Then as we come nearer they rise higher, expose their might, and woo us with a kind of passionate compulsion; and the more formidable they are, the more fascinating. Vernet is one of the best points of departure to ascend Canigou.

The principal historic monument in the neighborhood of Vernet is the Abbey of St-Martin-de-Canigou, almost half way up the side of the mountain of that name. There is, however, no compulsion, no guides to force

their attentions, no agents to direct a choice whether first to ascend the peak, or to do that after climbing to the Abbey. By a happy chance, we arranged to make first a practise climb to St. Martin's, and did. After that the further ascent seemed to have nothing better to offer. The experience at St. Michael's somewhat curbed our expectation of St. Martin's. I remember how easily I could have been persuaded from the trip, and how I undertook it a little patronizingly, as if it were well enough just for a walk, to pass the time. The narrow valley, the lofty precipitous mountain walls, should have suggested what could be expected.

One leaves by the south end of town, across the River Cady. We lost our way even before reaching the bridge, which was not a bad beginning for it plunged us at once into the excitement of uncertainty and of all sorts of pleasant adventures, across miniature meadows, and through toy orchards, and finally forced us to cross the Cady where there was no bridge. This was, however, less formidable than it sounds, since the stream dignified by the name of river is scarcely twenty feet across and its bed is largely great boulders, with the water dashing all around them, but never over them. We arrived on the opposite bank right handsomely, dry shod and agreeably diverted. The proper route starts out of town a carriage road. It is shabby enough as such, but it soon degenerates, though workmen were repairing it diligently in spots.

A mile and a half up-hill leads into a lump of houses called the village of Casteil. People not only exist here, they actually support a café. In France any group of houses supports a café. If there is only one house, it is a safe inference that it is a café. Alongside this little refreshment station at Casteil is the only horizontal bit of ground in sight and, true to national instincts, into it is squeezed a single tiny metal table and four metal chairs. There is where these villagers meet in their hours of leisure, around this table. From the size of the village I doubt if the table is ever crowded.

Up to this point one has furtive glimpses of the tower and walls of St. Martin's, although it is perched almost half way to the top of Canigou. That crest, even at this altitude, is still six thousand feet above Casteil. The abbey looks much farther than half way, for the face of the mountain supporting it is but little off perpendicular, and naturally the eye foreshortens the farther distance. Yet when St. Martin's is reached, and one looks on up, it is nearly a mile farther to the line where the crest touches the sky. From Casteil the abbey's dark walls blend with the peak. Yet at times its broken surfaces catch light enough to distinguish it; seen in this perspective, it sits up there as might a great strong eagle perched on a crag.

Beyond Casteil no more is seen of our objective. We are under it and the way leads up the face of the mountain. Here wheel tracks disappear. The road narrows to a path, with a surface of broken granite most un-

friendly to shoes. It rises sharply in a kind of zig-zag ladder, one hundred feet to the right, a sharp turn about, and a hundred feet or so to the left, and ever up, up, up. For all the rocks, nature is still in a gracious mood, and wherever there is a handful of earth there is a tuft of grass or a flowering bush or even a tree, though here trees sometimes seem to grow directly out of the granite. There is tumbling water everywhere. It hurries along by the path, it tosses back the light from silvery waterfalls, and even when it is unseen its music fills the air. Above, the mountain's face stretches on, but the precipice lengthens beneath, and the vistas down the valley grow into great panoramas. At last, unexpectedly, the path makes a final semi-circular sweep up to the gate of the abbey perched on a crag detached slightly from the massif of the mountain, the roofs of Vernet a mere handpatch of color far below, the crest of Canigou as much farther above, alone, aloof, amazing.

As one lifts one's self step by step up the flinty hazardous path, the earth receding, and the open blue coming nearer, one mounts also toward that difficult consciousness of the determination of the founders of the abbey to remove themselves as far as possible from "the wicked world," from contact with temptations, to seek here their nearest attainment of heaven on earth. One can not but feel, here in this eyrie, that, if this ideal was possible, the monks of St-Martin must have attained it.

This abbey was begun in the year 1001 by Count Gui-

ford, who took the habit here in 1045 and died here four years later. It thrived for several centuries, but was already a ruin by the beginning of the seventeenth. It was at this time that the officials of Perpignan came and bore away the relics of St. Gaudèrique which were battled for at Vernet and Villefranche. The abbey seems to have been quite abandoned for the succeeding three hundred years when, in 1902, the now venerable Bishop of Perpignan, Monseigneur de Carsalade du Pont, took possession and began a tasteful restoration of the massive group, which to-day presents the church, the monastery, the abbot's palace and the cloister in an accurate replica of their original state of nearly a thousand years ago. The styles of architecture are somewhat mixed, the decorations combining Lombard as well as Roman and Saracen details. Aside from its challenge to our admiration in its historic interests and its archeological beauties, is its challenge to our understanding of how the prodigious feat of placing these buildings here, so near the sky, was ever accomplished.

In the tower which rises above the monastic group are three bronze bells which more than gratified curiosity as to the beauty and variety of decoration of a French carillon. They present a metal surface ornate as the pages of an old missal. Each proclaims its own name and history in Catalan, in the midst of friezes of armorial bearings, and exquisite miniature statuettes, in high relief, of patron saints and former abbots.

Monseigneur du Pont makes St. Martin's his summer home. Here his friends come from both sides of the frontier, for he is as ardently Catalan as he is loyally French, and wherever he is, is a center of Catalan culture. He still climbs up in the spring in spite of his fourscore years, remaining until fall and dispensing a welcome to casuals, as well as to acquaintances, which they bear away as not the least treasured of their souvenirs. Not his welcome so much as his farewell seemed a little the more memorable to me, for, as we started away, across the courtyard to the gate, he came hurrying after, and asked, with a grace that doubled the favor, if I would not carry a particular letter down the mountain to the post. On the way I did not resist looking at it, and found it addressed with many fine flourishes to his Vicaire Général at the Cathedral of St. Jean, at Perpignan, and fancied all sorts of important official secrets inside.

As we descended we met a drover and his heavy laden mite of a donkey, toiling along the ramps up the cliffs, bearing supplies no doubt for Monseigneur's table. But we observed that, save for friends lunching at the abbey, the drover was the only human we had seen in either direction, all day, so free of tourists are the high places — in the mountains. And we observed, too, a little selfishly — perhaps, how rich it made us feel to possess, without consciously sharing, such splendors of nature and such astonishing monuments of man.

There are some experiences so surprising, so com-

plete and satisfactory, that it seems a bit futile to seek others, or at least a bit ungracious to seek them at once. It was so after climbing the flank of Canigou and finding the abbey of St. Martin. We decided to scratch our list of all detours as far as Font-Romeu, go directly there without delay, and there quietly luxuriate in the memory of this experience. That decision meant we would not see the Carença Gorges, the church of La Mesquita, or Vauban's fortifications at Villefranche. But of what account is a program if it may not be changed? After all, it isn't a contract that may not be broken. Besides there are surely other gorges farther along; in Vernet we had heard some doubt cast on the Saracen origin of La Mesquita; and, as for Vauban, his works are all over the Pyrenees, one of the most notable examples farther along our route, at the head of this same valley, at Mont Louis.

We were not long on the train ascending the upper reaches of the Tet, however, when it became obvious that, no matter what other wonders we had cut out, there was no rest for the eye or the interest along this route. Here were the mountains in all their picturesqueness; the lonely sky-line chapels and towers and villages; the river pounding and vaulting through narrow gorges, as if clearing its way by main force; and the walls of the valley coming down to the water's edge, for the most part, in unbroken, nearly vertical lines. Yet, by a slow process, only less long than the ages during which the

river has worn its way through, man has for unknown centuries worked his way through this wild valley, too. Such engineering as is here revealed we thought left little to choose between the beauties of nature and the wonders of science. Over a distance of less than seventeen miles a further altitude of thirty-nine hundred feet is attained. The railway and the motor road parallel each other, if one may be permitted the use of the word parallel to express anything so unlike as the meanderings of these two highways, which are more like two scrambled corkscrews. A drunken man would feel at home on such a road if anywhere. The roads run, for the most part, on curved shelves on either side of the stream, sometimes down at the water's edge, sometimes high on the face of the valley wall. The turnings and twistings, the bridges and tunnels, are a constant source of surprise.

Among its many wonders, however, the best remembered feature of this ride was the Séjourné Bridge, named for the engineer who conceived it. The train runs along the mountainside on a shelf two hundred feet above the torrent, when suddenly it appears to turn into space. But a magnificent viaduct of granite arches bears it to the other side. From the shoulders of the gorge rises a single Gothic arch one hundred feet across. This, in turn, supports four small arches and, in part, two of the sixteen great arches which carry the line itself, over eight hundred feet, from mountain to mountain.

We doubted we would see more impressive vistas than those of the deep precipitous valley of the Tet, as the train trailed slowly over this aerial roadway. But we did.

A few miles beyond we reached the town of Mont Louis, which is interesting on several counts. It was formerly the capital of the French Cerdagne, the curious wide upland valley which here stretches off southwest between the peaks into Spain. When that treaty of the Pyrenees, in 1659, gave France a part of the Cerdagne, which is one of the few natural highways over the mountains between Spain and France, Louis XIV at once commissioned his great engineer, Vauban, to fortify Mont Louis, as well as other vulnerable situations on his new frontier. Every vehicular pass was thus protected. There were eight of these mountain fortresses, five defending the passes east of the center, and three defending those west of the center.

Mont Louis has an altitude of five thousand, one hundred and thirty-five feet. In telling us this M. le Curé added, a little boastfully: "It is the highest garrisoned town in France. It is also the highest station on any of the French railway systems;" adding a bit contemptuously: "One does not count the funicular to Superbagnères." Not to be outdone by the curé, the postmaster added, and doubtless truthfully, "And in winter Mont Louis is the coldest town in France." It was not hard to believe, even then, for the wind was fresh and cool under a brilliant midsummer sun.

After Perpignan we had found but indifferent lodgings, save at Vernet-les-Bains, but at the end of our ride up the northern rim of the amphitheater of the Cerdagne, we luxuriated at the very modern Grand Hotel of Font-Romeu. There is less luxury and more romance farther up at the Hermitage, with ancient arcades dating from the twelfth century, and its miraculous Virgin, one of the two celebrated shrines of this neighborhood.

The other is Nuestra Señora de Nuria in Spain, reached by a lonely mountain trail just beyond the frontier pass opposite. There is an added attraction at Nuria in a copper bowl, attributed to St. Giles, into which the pilgrims, who wish to be cured of sterility and certain other maladies, plunge their heads. There is another spring of similar virtue farther west. The French women of the Pyrenees at least have not been unwilling mothers.

From the hillside of Font-Romeu spreads a prospect unique in these mountains. It embraces nearly the whole of the Cerdagne, which here looks to be a billowy plain almost as much as a valley in its rim of mountains, whose crests are all nearly on a level with Canigou, among them the peaks of Carlitte, Puigmal and Finistrelle even higher. Yet the floor of the Cerdagne is itself so high that the surrounding crests give only a fraction of the sense of height that isolated Canigou has from the plain of Roussillon. The Cerdagne presents a calming contrast to the sterile flanks of Canigou and the savage wild-

ness of the upper Tet, for its floor is almost wholly cultivated, the nearer uplands spread away in bright pastures, and dark green forests reach toward the cool granite peaks. And here, at last, one sees France and Spain in a single panorama.

The Cerdagne is the only plain-like expanse near the mountain tops the length of the Pyrenees. Beyond, at the west, begins the wall of peaks which opens only twice to wheeled vehicles until it begins to dip into the Atlantic. This plain divides its waters between the two countries. To the east the Tet carries off all the streams rising on the northern side. On the southern side, in the wild crevices of the Pic de Sègre, rises the Segre, a Spanish river, though its source is in France, for it flows the length of the Cerdagne to the west and then turns south on a long course to its union with the Ebro on the plains of Catalonia. But all the waters here pay toll to the Mediterranean. Not yet in these eastern Pyrenees have we reached the first sources of Atlantic waters, though they are in fact quite near, just over the barrier of the Pic de Carlitte.

CHAPTER VII

The Road to Andorra

THE LURE OF ANDORRA—A BIT OF SPAIN ASTRAY IN FRANCE—BOURG-MADAME AND PUIGCERDA—SO THIS IS SPAIN—MOTOR-COACHING—SANCHO PANZAS, DONS AND OUR DULCINEA—THE WILD AND SAVAGE SEGRE—SEO DE URGEL—PICTURE-BOOK STREETS—CATHEDRAL SHADOWS—THE WHITE TEETH OF THE CADI.

Tucked away among the peaks of the Pyrenees is one of the smallest and one of the most curious states in Europe. France and Spain, which travel elbow to elbow from sea to sea, part just once along the crest of the range and encircle its wild valleys. It is surrounded by mountains whose altitudes average over nine thousand feet. The nearest railroad in France is over forty miles north, and in Spain a railway comes no nearer than fifty miles. Wheeled vehicles may approach it over only one road up from Spain on the south. On the north and east and west it may be reached only by mule trails and foot-paths over four of the wildest and loneliest passes of this range, at altitudes all above eight thousand feet.

This little state enjoys independence though it is not proper to call it a republic. It has no army, no newspapers, not a single printing press, and neither currency

nor postage of its own. Yet its people are healthy and happy, and it has followed pretty much the same religious and domestic habits of life, and has enjoyed the same independent political privileges since the fighters of the valley gave Louis le Débonnaire their aid against the Saracens, about the year 805. The name of this little mountain state is The Valleys of Andorra; or, for short, just Andorra.

Here, on the hillside of the Cerdagne, we were within thirteen miles of one end of that single vehicular road which leads into Andorra. It is a detour that tourists seldom take. No wonder, for Andorra is unexploited, practically unknown beyond its own rim of peaks, hard to reach, hard even to learn how to reach, without the temptations of luxury, without even the probability of comfort *en route* or in residence there. All these deterrents for others were as nothing in the face of the privilege of seeing so detached, primitive and unspoiled a community. They became indeed assurance of a rare experience. The temptation was for stronger wills than ours to resist. We left the main roads for later and plotted the way to Andorra.

Our itinerary was a little uncertain at the start. One could, of course, depend on the railroad across the Cerdagne as far as Bourg-Madame. There one could find a carriage or, at least, a cart for luggage, and one could walk across the border into Spain and beyond to near-by Puigcerda. There a motor-coach ran on, thirty-five

miles west, through the valley of the Segre to the town of Seo de Urgel, where we would spend the night. Thence the direction would certainly be north, directly up the valley of the River Valira, into Andorra Viella, the capital of Andorra, but by what means we would best be able to travel it, no one at Font-Romeu was able to say, It was "so far away." There might be a motor-car for hire there, or a *tartane*, surely a mule. At any rate the final distance was not great, not much more than a dozen miles. Distances, however, have a way of being comparative. A dozen miles in a motor is certainly not to be compared with the compounding length of a dozen miles over mountain trails on the back of a mule or on foot. Being, for the moment, much more excited and curious than practical, we were soothed into a kind of security, and so set out to let happen what might.

Once comfortably settled in our little train we were surprised to have it start off on a wild race around curves, over culverts, and through tunnels, which carried us from the heights of Font-Romeu down to the floor of the valley in short order. From the air this track must have looked like the trail of a fancy skater. It was disappointing so to throw away, in a quarter of an hour, the altitude which had been achieved so laboriously and magnificently in coming up the Tet. It seemed so futile, an extravagance, as if something should be done about it. But all that could be done about it was to shift from one end of the compartment to the other, as the train swung

about, in an effort to enjoy as many prospects as possible of this lovely green bowl held on the shoulder of the range up so near heaven.

Though Spain was actually before us, at the very end of the line, yet, on the way there, we nearly ran out of France and into Spanish territory midway the distance, and missed by less than half a mile. This was because just here there is a political curiosity, perhaps unmatched of its kind, a bit of one country astray and detached from its parent bloc, entirely surrounded by the territory of another country. This is Llivia, a tiny *enclave,* barely four miles square, belonging to Spain, flying the Spanish flag over its single "town," yet no point of its circumference nearer than a mile to Spanish territory. So it has been since 1659, an ironic witness of the hair-splitting of the treaty-makers. When the present Franco-Spanish frontier was drawn France demanded all the villages of the French Cerdagne. Spain consented. It was so nominated in the bond. Then the wily Iberian called the confiding Frank's attention to the fact that Llivia was no "village," it held the charter of a "town," and so, though it was a mile within French territory, Spain would not give it up, and did not, and Spanish it remains. It is a shoe-shaped plot of ground with the toe southeast and the heel southwest, and is connected with Spain by a shoestring of a neutral road over French soil. The Spanish agreed never to fortify Llivia.

Whatever this high valley of the Cerdagne may be in

detail, its political divisions are united in two strong bonds. One is the unbroken sweep of the large landscape and the other is the domestic speech and spirit of the people. Here still, as below in Roussillon and Catalonia, the people are nationally French and Spanish, but inherently and tenaciously Catalan. This spirit voices itself in the Cerdagne in these popular verses, which also convey a sample of the Catalan language:

Som los hereus de la montanya,
som los pubills del Pirieu;
fills de la Fransa o de l'Espanya,
tots som germans á Font-Romeu.

Aquî hi tenim bressol y llosa,
qu'es nostra patria natural
desde Carlit fins â la Tosa,
desde Cadî fins á Puigmal.

Meytat de Fransa,
meytat d'Espanya,
no hi há altra terra
com la Cerdanya.

The train came to the end of its tracks in the little undistinguished town of Bourg-Madame, on the international frontier, and we scurried to the Syndicat d'Initiative, to get advice as to entering Spain and proceeding to Andorra. Our passports had the visé of a local official at Perpignan which admitted to Andorra, but what could or should be done about entering Spain was uncertain. The president of the Syndicat was on the doorstep of his office, a round little man, with an ingratiating

manner and a lively willingness to be of aid. He might have been waiting for us for hours and he led us off down the main, and for all we saw the only, street in Bourg-Madame, in a kind of cheerful triumph. First we stopped at the office of M. le Commissaire de Police who was silent and severe, a proper man of mystery, with a detached manner just the opposite of M. le Président, but prompt to act. Then he conducted us across the street, all of fifteen adventurous feet, down a tunneled hall much longer than the street was wide, to the domestic back-room of a banker who temporarily became the repository of our valuables. They were few indeed, merely our francs in excess of probable expenses to Andorra. It was, I confess, a superfluous gesture of security against the mysteries of this journey into a remote land, among a strange people, so far from the reassurance of a railroad. As if virtue's path were always paved with steel rails and banditry fled at the snort of a locomotive. Whereas it is pretty well known that some hold that the fact is just the opposite.

M. le Président then led us forward on to the middle of the bridge over the River Raour, to the international line which divides the river midway. It's true the advance was only a hundred feet or so, and that the Raour is only a purling pebbled stream whose banks are less than thirty feet apart, but he did it with a manner which—coupled with the azure uniforms of the French officers and the gray uniforms of the Spanish officers

Chapel of Santa Coloma, on the road to Andorra

The freight carriers of the Pyrenees, on the road to Andorra

before us, and our own emotions which left no element of the situation undramatized—created a worthy effect. He accepted our thanks modestly but still beamingly, and turned back to France while we advanced into Spain. We did not see M. le Président du Syndicat d'Initiative de Bourg-Madame on our return, but assuredly we would have been cheered if we had, and any one's visit there is poorer by not knowing his smile and receiving his amiable attentions.

Naturally our eyes were wide for impressions of this other country and people, as if the essence of all Spain might be congested in this little city of Puigcerda, with its scant three thousand souls. There are in fact two precise moments when consciousness of national characteristics are apt to be most vivid and true: once when entering a country for the first time, the first never to be repeated moments when all is new; and again when, after gathering many experiences, one leaves it all behind, the picture well filled in and held a little in perspective. The latter is apt to be the truer impression, the former the more piquant.

So when, after having submitted our passports to the careful scrutiny of the French officers who kept a businesslike guard at their customs kiosk, we passed without challenge, without so much as a glance, the three Spanish officers who puffed their cigarettes as they lounged in the shade of the trees at the other end of the bridge, I, at least, registered, "So this is Spain." The

way into the town is up an indifferent road and through the narrow defile of the Calle de la Libertad, a street where delicate iron balconies reach out from every window and colorful curtains are tossed out and over them to temper the light within, admit the air, and provide shady security for the women who watch the world go by in the street beneath. That was Spain. Other short narrow balconied streets led to the much vaunted "lake" to which the swelldom of the Spanish plains come in summer, but in the ado made over this artificially gathered water which is not much more than a pond, one felt rather the arid sunburnt stretches of the lowlands, and realized again that this is Spain. Puigcerda has no historic monuments to speak of. Its age and story since the King of Aragon decreed it in the twelfth century is reflected in the mass of its buildings which seem to have grown here slowly, as barnacles might grow, and yet to have attained maturity early in life. The church rewards a visit, but not because it is large or rich, for it is neither. One enters through the diminishing arches of a beautiful Roman doorway, down several steps, into a suddenly inky interior. There are no windows, no light at all to speak of, for all of it, that finds its way in, filters through a few tiny unwashed panes of two cupolas in the roof. When the eyes became accustomed to the darkness a few altars gradually came out against the walls, gaudy gilded retablos and primitive chromatic statues piled up above them, a few flickering tapers

pierced the shadows without dispersing them, the stone pavement lay uneven but worn smooth, and a coolness in the heavy air might have been refreshing if it had not rather chilled with unsunned dampness. It must have been like this for ages. Again the feeling that this is Spain.

The motor-coach to Seo de Urgel was found sunning itself in a scrap of a plaza with the great name of Salmeron to distinguish it. The Casa de la Vall flanked it and on top of the Casa perched the statue of an angel contemplating the lovely valley and the snow-patched mountains to the south; for how long no one could say, but for centuries enough, it appeared, for the elements to have worn him into the frailest skeleton of a heavenly guardian. We took first-class passage, when offered the choice of three, wondering how the distinction would be made in a single motor-coach. Later it appeared that our places were next the driver, with the privilege of his society and an uninterrupted forward outlook. The two rows next behind were second-class, which lacked only the advantage of view, for the passengers and the driver kept up a constant exchange of chatter. Three rows at the back were third-class, and for their coin-economy the passengers probably paid additionally in the discomfort of hard riding over the rear axle.

Motor-coach travel, here at least, must be very like what tradition makes of stage-coach days. The four galloping horses are missing, and the roaring cylinders,

ten times as powerful, may be an unromantic substitute. There may be less music in the honk of the motor horn, which announces the coming down the valley and warns of the start after each brief stop, much less than in the lip-music of other days. Otherwise the old and the new must be very like.

The plaza was in size and pretension little more than an old-time inn-yard. The passengers idled in with friends and relatives, and exchanged good-bys with the same tearful finality and nervous laughter as if the end of the road were five thousand instead of fifty kilometers away. There was the same old busy stowage of bulky luggage on the roof, and of smaller parcels probably of more precious content under the seats, behind the heels, on the lap, anywhere. The same counting of parcels, the same unaccountable missing of one of them, the same chattered dread lest the coach start without it, and then the surprise and laughing relief when it is found just where it might have been expected.

On the second-class benches were a young Spanish beauty whose dark loveliness, under a lacy mantilla, received the instant tribute of every one's glances; a fat shop-keeper whose wife was packing him off ostentatiously for a "cure" at the baths of San Vincens some twenty miles down the valley; and a very military major. Beyond in the humble third-class were two old women and a small boy, a not too smoothly shaven priest, and a half dozen dark visaged mountaineers. The chauffeur

was surely the descendant of a long line of diligence drivers. He was built like a bull, though rather fat than muscular. In his bronze skin and puffed jowls there was the story of many weathers as well as of the many favors he enjoyed in the cafés along the route. After some trifling amiable delays, the mail agent arrived with his sack, and, with just one more hesitation while the chauffeur lighted the longest cigar that surely ever was wrapped, the cylinders jumped into action, everybody said good-by all over again, the postman's wife arrived breathlessly with his lunch including the inevitable bottle of wine, the horn shrieked a warning and the motor monster moved off.

For half the distance to Seo de Urgel the road winds down the Spanish Cerdagne over an undulating green carpet perhaps a mile wide with the mountain walls thus held at a little distance. The villages are fewer but the ruins repeat themselves here as frequently as back in France. There are strangely few people in sight. Very rarely even does one see the *tartane*, the native pony-drawn cart, very like an Irish jaunting car, the driver and his companions, if any, hidden under the low round hood. Mile after mile the coach pushes on and for long stretches we were the only moving object in the landscape. Man's presence is felt, however, even if he is not seen, for the golden grain, in the occasional small stone-hedged field by the torrent's bed, is cut and stacked, and up on the steep slopes rise occasional vine covered ter-

races, each much narrower than the depth of the wall that supports it. There is the story of the frugal life here, field and terrace, grain and vine, a little bread and a little wine.

Once we passed two nuns, on foot, a cheerful note of color, all blue and white, and we wondered where they were going in this apparently unpeopled valley. The real life of the road was furnished by the Carabineros. It was not a little comforting to have their stone shelters or their small station houses appear at somewhat frequent intervals, all the way to Andorra. In their well tailored gray-green uniforms, edged with a hair-line of red, with their black caps of varnished leather, and their rifles slung behind their shoulders, they appeared smarter here than back at the Raour. Here, too, they were much more active. In contrast with the lounging guards at that frontier post these officials were alert from the moment the coach halted. They eyed the passengers carefully, scrutinized all the bags and bundles, and twice they required travelers to lift their packs down to the road, and to untie them and expose the contents. No one here it seems would think of using a trunk.

The only other human note in the landscape was the occasional herdsman, each one a varying suggestion of Sancho Panza. He may have worn store clothes but the disguise was thin. His mule betrayed him. But where was Don Quixote? If that amorous Don was nowhere to be seen, there were other dons, at every stop, with just

as keen an eye for a beautiful lady, for they appeared to recognize a Dulcinea under the mantilla in our second-class, and as long as the coach was quiet they circled it, rather hesitatingly, as they passed beneath her window, with a carelessness that was wholly fraudulent.

Nothing of all this seemed, however, to engage the other passengers. Their interest never wandered outside the coach. Puigcerda had scarcely disappeared when there was a united attack on the store of bread and wine, with its trimmings of sausage and cheese. When this noise had quieted, and you should hear a Catalan at lunch, a more sociable spirit spread through the coach. Cigarettes were lighted and the gossip began. Even the invalid took heart and scolded his over-petting wife. The third-class grew loud in roaring approval of the padre who seemed a born leader at anecdote and repartee. This was only another of the many times I should have felt richer in the understanding of this mountain language. However, the glorious ever-changing outlook before us was compensation enough. The driver no more spared his engine than his ancestor of the diligence would have spared his prancers, and though there was no cracking of whip, he seldom throttled his gas. We would have found only a trifle less exercise in a rough-rider's saddle. The guide-books, in some respects made a little out-of-date by the war, said that between Puigcerda and Seo de Urgel there is only a mule path. Vagrant information in France was to the effect

that recently an automobile road had been built to connect the two towns. Neither statement was wholly true. The mule path was still there, but it did seem, as we bumped over it, as if it had been widened a bit, in places.

When the valley narrowed, half way it was, the coach came to a full stop at the village of Martinet, a primitive dirty group of buildings by the side of the Segre. In diligence days the horses would have been changed here. But other excuses for a long halt were easily found and every one poured out of the coach and into the dark, meager, stuffy café, to partake of more bread and wine. The chauffeur was obviously the hero of the village loungers and the petted darling of the bar. When he had drunk up his welcome here, he and postie went next door, to the village store, and there proved they had no insurmountable prejudice in favor of the café's wine.

The scrap of road outside was meantime made active by the passing of a tinkling herd of sheep, and on their heels a wine-cart, the barrels nicely balanced fore and aft the two great wheels. The heavy load was drawn by four enormous horses with ribboned manes and tails and tufty fetlocks behind the pastern joints, ornately metaled collars and harness, and long blue and yellow aprons of tasseled cotton. But nothing else so engaged me here as the vision, across the river, high up on a gray rocky spur, of a dead and deserted village, its ruins gray as the rocks out of which it rose, a specter of a remote past when life was only secure where easily defended.

The second stage of the journey led through wilder and wilder country. The peaks were higher and nearer, the valley narrowed to a gorge. Whenever the wall opened to the south to let in waters from the heights, we were reminded that we were traveling just under the flank of the Sierra del Cadi, for there against the greens and browns and blacks of the lower mountains, far in the air against the azure, would appear its chalk-white jagged perpendicular crests; stark, gaunt and a little terrible. All along, the air was musical with rushing waters. The Segre itself had grown torrential, churned white in its rocky course. Small wonder for within thirty-four miles it is fed by more than that many tributaries.

Somehow this savage glen, the like of which I never had been in before, was nevertheless not unfamiliar. Then I realized why, for it must have been the model for all the third acts that ever had been painted for Carmen. It would not have been surprising to see the smugglers troop out at any point, to have seen pale Michaela hunting her truant lover Don José, or to have heard the taunting song of the Toreador behind the rocks. Most surprisingly, when all was wildest, the valley would open for a peaceful patch of grain, generally hedged with a row of tall poplars, higher than the patch was wide, a summer-time hint of winters when their branches baked to charcoal would give a warming glow from some old wife's brazier.

It was in this stretch of savage country we passed the only house that I remembered to have seen for many miles. It was made indelible in memory by a simple little drama that was acted there on our return. It was a dull little stone gray hut not far from the road. We stopped before it to take on a buxom peasant girl with a strange frightened luster in her eyes. As we approached she and her mother were standing before the door. The mother pressed the girl's cheeks to hers, unemotionally for all we could see, and did not move from the threshold. The girl picked up her enormous pack, and without turning again took her place in the third-class. The old mother remained quite immovable, her hands clasped before her, a black statue in the niche of the open door. As we moved away she began to raise her hand in farewell, but did not complete the gesture, as if it were useless, perhaps unregarded, or she was possibly held stiff and timid by fear that the undercurrents be too strong. The girl glanced toward her, stolidly, without nod or smile or any other movement than that of a furtive eye. It was a brief simple episode but the recollection of it kept recurring for an explanation. The aged, rigid, black figure left behind, alone in the lonely mountains, and this budding young woman, with all her belongings, leaving for the active world beyond. What did it mean? Where was she going? Why? Was she sacrificing all the tenderest ties she knew to go where she could earn enough to send a portion home? Or was

she in revolt against a tragic loneliness? I wanted to turn and see the girl, to see whether her mask had broken in tears or a smile, in regret or relief.

There is no transition stage here between country and town, no scattered dwellings to indicate the approach of the town ahead. It is like that in many things in these mountains, abrupt and absolute. The herdsmen, shepherds and tillers all live in their village. The custom is another inheritance of the days when security from the predatory barons, and other bandits, great and small, lay only there. Perhaps it is a little, too, because these amiable southerners are gregarious, and can not forego the plaza and the café. So the eye grows accustomed to houseless hillsides, and associates houses only with a village where the hills open a little way, or with the towns which appear only in the wider valleys. Where the Valira rolls down to join the Segre the mountains are farther apart than anywhere after Puigcerda. It was not surprising then to find on this suddenly disclosed plain the tiled housetops of Seo de Urgel.

Here is picture-book Spain brought to life; light and shade, color and gloom, luxury and filth. The plaza is a shoddy open stretch of yellow earth, mottled with the shadows of parallels of green willows, flanked with old windowed walls of weathered gray, pink, yellow, brown and white. Here leisure sprawls in the shade and only the scavengering dogs seem alive. These same dogs would distinguish Seo de Urgel from every other town

in the Pyrenees, if nothing else did, and it is hard to believe that anywhere else in the world, even in Constantinople, these amiable creatures are so thin, so filthy, so mangy and so neglected.

The Calle Mayor is indeed the Main Street in more than name, yet even here commerce is less evident than the magic coloring. The houses repeat the whole chromatic scale in a minor tone. At every window there is of course a shallow iron balcony. From every window, too, stream brilliant colored shades which are tossed out beyond the rails. Even at the street level where stunted thick foliaged trees give color but scant shade, the doorways are decorated with curtains of strung beads or knotted hemp, all heavy purple and green, and red and white, done into patterns of giant lilies or orchids or roses or the name of the shop or of its padrone. When the sun strikes down this street and a breeze moves the curtains and screens, it shimmers with life, gala as a carnival.

Elsewhere the streets are mere openings, deep and narrow glens, wide enough for man and mule, and no more, to pass, sometimes not even wide enough for the mule, roofed with a slender ribbon of azure. They break off suddenly, lead into blind alleys, curve so cunningly that the sense of direction is soon dulled, and suggest if anything a labyrinth, as if a thousand years ago the classic georgian garden maze we know in box, had been anticipated on a mammoth scale in masonry.

When we asked a passing padre the direction of the cathedral he at once made himself our guide. He spoke only Catalan and Spanish, which left our understanding sealed, and we tried to tell him so, but he was not in the least daunted, and lectured on. Only he talked a little louder and more emphatically, as if to make himself understood by force, if not by the symbols of his language. It was all done with such generous kindly enthusiasm that he found his audience attentive and grateful if not too comprehending.

Seo de Urgel, literally the "see" or "bishopric" of Urgel, has been an Episcopal seat since the fifth century. The present cathedral is much more modern. It dates from the eleventh century. It looks it. We were taken first into the cloisters, a box of pure sunshine, tempered at the edges by the low arches with their sculptured grotesques, and a venerable spreading central tree surrounded by a dozen dwarfed trees as if a symbol of the prince-bishop himself in the midst of his attendants. All was peaceful and still save for the thump-thump of a cobbler, who had his bench in a kiosk, in a dark corner behind the colonnade. It seemed a strange place for a cobbler, here in this damp odor of sanctity. He gave a curt but cheerful good-day to the padre and we passed from the sunlight into the cathedral alongside.

The darkness was at first impenetrable and mysterious, as in the tiny church at Puigcerda. The walls were all but windowless, and even the soft but radiant color-

ing from four small openings high up in the apse only accented the darkness. One could see the four rosy spots high in the distance but one couldn't see one's hand before one's face. In this larger church the effect was tremendous, all heights and depths and undefinedness. By degrees the massive clustered columns came out, the arches faintly traced themselves, then glints of feeble light touched the gold of the rich altars of carved and gilded wood, flamboyantly Spanish. As we advanced, down the long nave, bits of the tall iron screen about the choir and main altar separated themselves from the shadows, and we pressed our faces to the figured grille to see the spectral throne and stalls and other treasures within, all dating back over eight centuries, when the story of how Charlemagne based here the Christian advance into Spain was already two other centuries old. What this church may be when revealed in strong lights, enlivened by the full pomp of the episcopal entourage, I do not know nor am sure that I wish to. No reality could surpass the suggestions of silence and shadows.

From within the tight streets of Urgel one sees nothing of the world beyond, but the outskirts are not anywhere distant. The worthwhile outlook is on the west. There at the left among the trees and fields the Segre and Valira meet. Nearer, though on the other side of the Valira, stand out three separate hills and each is crowned by fortifications which look probably as they have looked for centuries gone. The position and group-

ing and coloring of each is individual, as of three different persons, and picturesque as any other mountain defenses that survive on this side of the range. One is known as *la ciudadela,* another as *el castillo,* and the third as *la torre de Solsano.* Collectively they are called *las fortalezas.* Their Spanish names, by which they are known here, seem so much more appropriate than their obvious English translation, because nowhere, where English is spoken, is there their equivalent.

On this side of the town one sees how completely Urgel is enclosed roundabout with mountains. The high rim is highest on the south, and the prospect is finest in that direction, for it discloses the Sierra del Cadi peaks in white unmasked stretches. There is something magical about the glistening teeth of the Cadi. It is generally remarked that nowhere else in Europe do mountains appear to be so extraordinarily high. They look the naked bones of mountains left to be washed by the tempests and bleached by the suns of millions of years. Vegetation shrinks from them and huddles in the valley far below. The wild beasts avoid them, even as men avoid a leper, and the eagle seems to hasten in its flight through the very air above them.

When this valley is seen at sundown, when the light fades from the *fortalezas* and lingers only on the summits, the changing colors and the shifting shadows are memorable. We saw it so, and trailed back into town by moonlight and through the plaza, only to intrude upon

the amorous pairs upon the benches. We ought to have been surprised, but were not, to find on one of them with her own attentive don—her head bent as if supported by his shoulder, and he one-armed for all we could make out in the darkness, pretending not to look in passing—our own Dulcinea of the journey down the valley of the Segre.

CHAPTER VIII

Andorra the Old

THE AWAKENING OF SEO DE URGEL—UP THE VALIRA—SAN JULIA DE LORIA—ANDORRAN POSTAL HABITS—ASS'S BACK BRIDGES—WATCH-TOWERS—ANCIENT CAMOUFLAGE—PHRYGIAN CAPS—LISTENING TO THE EARTH TREMBLE—ANDORRA LA VIELLA—THE KEY TO THE CAPITOL—THE SIX KEYS TO THE ARCHIVES—SMUGGLERS!—PORRO AND CANTI—THE ONLY SANITARY LOVING-CUP.

In spite of what all the rest of the world doesn't know about it, with relief we found that a mule-back climb is not the only way from Seo de Urgel to Andorra. Daily, at seven in the morning, or as soon thereafter as it suits every one's convenience, a motor-coach begins its climb up to the little capital of the so-called republic. Eagerness is no bad alarm-clock, so I was up and in the plaza before seven, waiting that not easily achieved convenience of the southerner who, though poor in all else, accounts himself rich in time. Although I could have believed that their delay was cheating me, it turned out that it enriched our experience to the extent of seeing old Seo de Urgel yawn itself awake on a summer morning.

The early mass bells jangled sweetly from several directions without creating a ripple on more than the air of the plaza. The dogs and flies were earliest alive. The

flies have no consideration for men, and the dogs take it out on their economic enemy the breakfast-hunting cats. A high two-wheeled cart lumbered by behind two square white oxen, yoked cruelly by the horns, but finely deliberate and dignified, with knitted screens of colored cords hanging on their foreheads and giving them a suggestion of veiled houris of some eastern harem. The drover walked before holding a long stick the other end of which rested on the yoke between the oxen's horns, and with the shifting of this rod he gave his beasts direction. Women passed, each balancing across her shoulder a long white pole bent into a graceful arc by the milk-can at either end. Two nuns crossed from one narrow passage to another, their white bonnets and purple scapulars catching the light for just a moment before they vanished. Then the silence broke to the muffled clatter of a donkey beating the dust with his tiny hoofs while a girl smacked his flank with a futile little switch. He was nearly submerged between twin batteries of tall tin cans, supported in a wicker saddle, probably bringing their share of the morning's milk into town. Another ass trailed along beneath a bundle of twigs four or five times the size of his little gray body. His companion was an ancient, to whose faltering steps the ass considerately restrained his gait. Or it may have been the end of a long journey for both that made them move so leisurely.

Further down the plaza, where an old palace sits back behind its high iron grill and houses the soldiery, an

early fanfare on a bugle was followed by a slow sauntering of uniforms out under the trees. The proud young Spanish officer in command of the squad strutted slowly back and forth, puffing a cigarette, his favorite breakfast probably, and trailed his sword disdainfully over the cobbles. The men saluted but he ignored them with an ostentatious indifference. The soldiers fell in presently and moved off under the command of a sergeant, for a drill and perhaps a plunge in the river. An old woman and a small boy crossed the plaza by the shorter way and might not have attracted attention if the urchin of five were not carrying a loaf of bread easily a foot longer than his own little self. Then came four magnificent mules in tandem, almost hidden beneath their metal studded harness and blue and yellow knitted trappings, drawing a high two-wheeled vermilion cart under its ballooning white canopy. They were neither driven nor led, for the carter sprawled snoozing on his wine casks under the hood. Alone in the otherwise empty plaza they were a pageant in themselves.

Meantime shutters had slipped down from two or three shop windows; the café took on life to the extent of a little tidying of the chairs and tables by a sleepy waiter; the coach was backed out from the garage; a group of passengers gathered near; and every moment the dogs, dogs, dogs became more conspicuous; docilely following a master, snarling out of a doorway before a sharp toe, foraging the gutters for food, snapping at

cats or chasing other dogs, asleep in sun-spots, rolling in the dust to be rid of the fleas they were unable to nose out of their hides, but never barking; a silent pack, lean and dirty, starved and abused, yet always willing to be friendly where no one in all their world seemed willing to be their friend.

The moment of departure came at last, only an hour late, with a generous consideration for every one, except any one in a hurry to start. But the distance is short, sixteen miles in all, nine to the border of Andorra and seven more over the whole length of the only road for wheeled vehicles in the independency, ending in the plaza of the village capital, Andorra Viella. All Andorra measures at most only nineteen miles from east to west and fifteen miles from north to south. The schedule is admirable for the tourist for, on arrival at the capital, the coach goes to sleep near the prison wall in the plaza, and the chauffeur plays cards before and after his bread and cheese and wine at the *fonda* of Amadeo Rossell, and neither shows any other activity until the return just before sundown.

Not a mile out of Urgel the road came to the side of the Valira and entered the tight valley, with that companionship which always exists between roads and streams in the mountains. At the frontier the smartly uniformed customs officers overlooked nothing. Beyond we were no sooner in Andorra than we were in the single narrow winding street of San Julia de Loria, which

The Capitol of Andorra

Andorra la Viella

Les Tours de Carol, on the road to Puymorens.
Remains of the line of watch-towers across the Pyrenees dating from the days of Charlemagne

sprawls over the rocks by the torrent. Five hundred Andorrans are said to cluster here. It is the main village of the commune or parish of San Julia, one of the six parishes into which the entire republic is divided. The entire nation of Andorra consists of not more than five thousand people.

Where the street of San Julia widened a little the whole village seemed congregated, and the coach came to a stop in their midst. No business was transacted except the scattering of some handbills and the delivery of the mail. I remember the handbills because my non-existent Spanish was none the less equal to seizing the main fact of their announcement, a game to be played at Urgel the Sunday following, since the English word, with minor concessions to phonetic spelling, was translated literally; "FUTBAL."

The mail delivery was equally unforgettable, but for another reason. The driver handed all the letters in his pocket, some twenty or twenty-five, to a businesslike boy of eleven, in a dirty linen smock, standing by the wheel. The boy looked them over, retained those presumably addressed to San Julians, and handed back the others. He was at once surrounded by an eager little group and on the spot he delivered everything, except one post-card which at once, in all its details, engaged the boy and all those who had been disappointed in receiving mail for themselves.

At Perpignan I asked the origin of the name Andorra,

and was told that Louis le Débonnaire, after defeating the Moors on the spot where is now the village of Massana, cried out: "Wild valleys, I christen you Endor!" and left some of his soldiers there as colonists. But why "Endor"? I asked for an explanation at Urgel, and got a sneer for the whole anecdote, and assurance that "the name Andor or An 'thor or An 'dur is very ancient. Pliny seems to have known them as Andorrisoe." At San Julia a padre took passage with us and I asked him to explain the name. "It comes from the Moorish word 'Aldarra,'" he replied with reassuring assurance, "which signifies 'a place thick with trees,' and fifteen hundred years ago Andorra was much more heavily wooded than now." But I kept on seeking answers to the enigma and accumulating a collection, ingenious and varied. It became a kind of game. The padre's theory of the Moorish Aldarra made the deepest impression, for it seemed likely that the Moors, accustomed to the treeless plains of Spain, would be particularly impressed by the occasional forests of these valleys. A learned kill-joy has, however, set the whole question back to my dark beginnings, by asking me to explain the presence of the name Andorra in at least four other widely scattered portions of treeless Spain.

The valley of the Valira beyond San Julia repeats with variations the wildest features of the valleys of the Tet and Segre. Over the greater part of the way there is not a village, scarcely a habitation in sight. The

mountains rise vertically from the road and the river and only where another tributary torrent breaks through these side-walls does one catch a glimpse of the peaks which border all Andorra. Here we saw for the first time Ass's Back bridges, each a narrow path across the swirling waters built ages ago over a faultless arch, the small stones of which appear to be rough hewn and laid without mortar. They were designed for a country and period where wheeled vehicles are little used and men's backs and mule's backs carry most of the burdens.

Where no other human expression is in sight, except the road before us, rises the bleak and lonely but exquisite old tower of Santa Coloma, so high, under its peaked roof like a mandarin's cap, that the low chapel beneath is almost overlooked. These high towers above low chapels, one often two to four times the height of the other, is characteristic of the churches outside the villages of Andorra. Here, in the uncertain days in which they were built, the watchman stood his vigil, and, when he sighted the enemy, passed the warning to the next tower, and so over the country as quickly almost as electricity would carry it now. They have not a high visibility for a stranger in the valley. But neither here have houses or chapels or bridges, for they are all built of the rough stone from the mountainside where they stand, and one is so like the other in color that only a sharp eye can detect them from any distance. Yet Andorra has been the most peaceful, over the longest period, of any

nation on earth. There are no fortifications, or ruins of fortifications, no ruined châteaux of over-lords, no defensive walls to villages. The only suggestion of an enemy is in the old chapel towers which have outlived their defensive purpose by many years, and to-day they are guarded occasionally by a hermit, who exists on alms tossed him by a passing muleteer, or by a more pious woman who kneels a moment at his altar.

Since entering the mountains we had been looking for the Phrygian cap which we had been told is still worn in these high places. It was a little appropriate that we saw not one of these ancient emblems of liberty until here on the lonely roadside of one of liberty's oldest strongholds. An old man, a little boy and a little girl stood aside as the coach sped by. The girl looked a bit out of Holland with a tight white cap that covered all her head and a black petticoat which brushed her heels. The boy wore the basque cap and a little nervously fumbled his long smock. It was the grandfather who wore the Phrygian cap. It sat tightly on the back of his head, but the long red bag, instead of falling over his shoulder, was folded over several times and the folds lay a little rakishly over his forehead. For whatever other reason the Andorrans may cling to these caps, at least one native fisherman, seen later on the banks of the river, used his as a sack to carry home his catch.

The valley does not part except near its head, when it opens into a smiling circle whose gently sloping floor,

of a hundred acres or so, is green and gold with grain, and whose hillsides are terraced some ways up, like the tiers of a vast amphitheater. The natural impression is that here again is the epic of bread and wine, but it is not quite so. The terraces are green with tobacco plants. The dried weeds are made into marketable tobacco and packed on donkeys over the mountains to France or to Spain, whence the little animals return laden with the wine for which it has been exchanged.

Beyond in the even higher valleys are pastures alternating with the forests. The grazing lands and the forests of Andorra are owned in common by all the people. Only the cultivated land, a small proportion of the whole, is held in private ownership. It is held close, too, from generation to generation, in the same family, by the rigid custom of what they call *cap de casa,* by which the head of the houses chooses his heir or successor among his sons, generally but not always the eldest. He marries and brings his wife to live in his father's house. He is a power, not only in the family but in the state, for it is the *cap de casa* who has the right to vote. Younger sons are sent to the seminary in Seo de Urgel to take holy orders, or they are married to landholding girls who are heirs to sonless fathers, and the girls join their names to the men's. Rarely do the youths brave the unenviable state of being bachelors here. Land is seldom conveyed and for that reason, perhaps, the ceremonial of conveyance remains old and quaint like all else here. All other de-

tails of papers and payment having been completed, the new proprietor is secure in his new property only when he proceeds to it and there the *bayle* places some of the earth in his hand and he spreads it over the surface of his new possession.

In this mountain cup, at the spreading head of the valley of the Valira, is the village capital, Andorra Viella in Catalan, or, in English, Old Andorra. The other five communes lie about it in easy walking distance, Canillo, the farthest, being a scant five miles away. The capital at an altitude of three thousand, five hundred and sixty feet is near the bottom of the cup whose jagged rim touches the sky at over nine thousand feet, and the other villages are all higher than Old Andorra, the highest at over six thousand feet. The summer sun is warm and comforting, but the arc of blue sky is not large and one looks up at the summits with a little, perhaps misplaced, sympathy for these people who do not know the glory of the sun rising or setting on the low rim of the plain or the sea.

The old houses of the capital opened like a narrow gateway as our modern battering ram of a gas-carriage stormed their gray walls. The coach made a thundering noise in the otherwise silent valley, its roar echoing mightily in the hills. Hearing it approach, half a dozen boys ran out from the houses to greet the coach, and threw themselves down on the roadside with their ears to the ground, listening to the trembling earth,

Then they ran in behind the opening and peeped coquettishly at us in passing, and, following on, were the only welcomers when the coach came to a stop in the little widening among the houses which is called the Plaza. When the engine had ceased panting and the passengers had disappeared through other openings, as characters in opera might vanish from a painted scene, we were left quite alone with a dog and a donkey, to become acquainted with the village as best we might, without the intrusion or the assistance, as you may prefer, of either guide or guide-book.

The Andorran villages are all small and silent. They not only take their color from the rocks above them from which they are built, but they lack even the colored roofs of villages lower down in the mountains, because here the rosy tiles are unknown, and the brown-gray houses are roofed with the more economical black slate, to be had for the effort of quarrying in any near-by hillside. Sometimes the owners have been too poor to afford nails, and their slates are held in place by boulders, and then the roofs look as if an avalanche had passed that way and after many years the debris had not yet been tossed from the housetops. In the villages the unstudied assemblage of the buildings, the balconies, and the vagrant pathways between soft-toned weathered walls, make for pictures everywhere. No one was able to tell how recently a house had been built here. It is currently believed, however, that the last house was finished seven hundred years ago.

There is nothing we saw which made that seem improbable.

The capital village clings to a rocky ledge on the west side of the valley. It is said that five hundred people live in this honeycomb of houses. They must live *in* their houses for hardly any were passed in the valley and none at all in the plaza. About this irregular triangle cluster the scrap of a café, the single store of the town, a landholder's house, the house of the Syndic or presiding officer of the republic, the house of the parish padre, a filthy, neglected and probably unused shed referred to as the prison, and at the end is the flank of the little church whose inside was dark and musty like the other Spanish churches we had seen, but ornate with carvings and colored statues, and gaudy with gilded retablos at several of the many tiny altars roundabout.

At the end of a labyrinthian passage, which drags the houses with it over the rock, we found, at the edge of the village, the capitol of the republic, the Catalan-called Casa de la Vall. In general it looked like an old mill, with a broadside of seventy feet and a depth of not more than fifty. In detail its stone and plaster walls presented no other features than a curious stone turret on three carved brackets at one corner near the roof, and an inset carving of the arms of Andorra near the door. The latter unites the arms of the Prince-Bishop of Urgel and the former Prince of Béarn, the miter and crozier of the one and the twin bulls of the other. In their flag the An-

dorrans borrow the blue from the tricolor of France and unite it with the red and yellow of Spain, in three horizontal bars.

Office-holding is without pay in Andorra, and hence unpopular, which, in part, explained why the capitol was empty, and locked. We strolled back to the plaza and into the solitary shop and there found the proprietors, two brothers, intelligent and hospitable, and eager to inform or exhibit, at our command. Our regret not to be able to enter the capitol was their first opportunity and they sent us with their young clerk to find the concierge. He preceded us, shouting aloud through the little passages, a little as if proclaiming our approach, but in reality calling the keeper of the key. She finally appeared at the upper window of a house where she was doing a washing, her hands pink and damp from the suds, and when she saw why she was called, she lost no time in descending and dried her fat little hands on the way.

The key was a monster, out of all proportion to the bearer, or to the Casa, or to all little Andorra itself. It was something over fifteen inches long and proportionately heavy. As we gathered before the door of the Casa she turned and presented me the key with her two hands, and with her head and laughing eyes jerked an unmistakable invitation to unlock the door. If it was not evident that this simple courtesy thrilled me, it did so none the less. It is no every-day occurrence in any one's life to unlock the capitol of a republic, and this one so vener-

able, and I'm not sure but that in the excitement I jumped a little as the bolt bumped back with an unexpected thump.

If the outside of the Casa looked like an old mill it was almost equally simple if not quite so rude, within. Off the entrance hall, which is part of a floor half below the ground, are the dungeons, empty these many years, but dark and damp and forbidding enough to scare virtue into any Andorran contemplating crime. Up-stairs there are five rooms of unequal size. One is the schoolroom with forms for forty pupils. The walls present a medieval decoration of the Passion of Our Lord, interestingly done and fairly well preserved. Next is the refectory with white crackling walls, rough tables and benches, and we found it hung with the faded finery of the last feast—dried evergreens, dusty paper roses, and a few sad muslin flags of the republic. The kitchen adjacent looked ages older. The oven is built in the masonry. That was fairly conventional. But when meat was cooked it was hung from a hook in the center of the room, and over a fire built on the stone floor. The smoke escaped by a hole in the roof directly above, through which we saw the azure of the sky. Beyond are the council chamber and a mite of a chapel, probably the only chapel in any capitol building in the world. From a pasteboard box, in a corner, the concierge displayed two cocked hats, with a primitive attempt at ornaments, and explained that these were kept for the President of France and the

Prince-Bishop of Urgel, when they came to exercise their privilege of sitting in council with the Andorran Twenty-four. Neither of the hats showed signs of wear, though plenty of indications of age.

The council chamber, not less simple than all else about this quaint house, is more in character, for against the walls are ranged the simple rush bottomed chairs of the Twenty-four, and above each of them hangs the Councilor's uniform of state, *el balandran et la tricone,* a gown of gray wool with a black velvet collar and a three-cornered hat of rough black texture. Set in the wall behind double panels is a cupboard whose door one should have no difficulty in smashing open with a few blows of the fist. It is, however, the archive of all Andorra, its holy of holies, the repository of its copy of the treaty of 1659 between France and Spain, which includes a guarantee of its independence. Except for the frailty of the door, the Andorrans have taken unique precaution to preserve their treasure, for this door is held by six locks, one above the other, and each of the six keys is kept in a different one of the six parishes. It is thus presumed that no one can reach the treaty except by the unanimous consent of the republic.

A village store is generally no poor place to gather information of a community or impressions of its people. This was no less true in Andorra the Old, tucked away in its nest in the Pyrenees, especially when the padrone is so sociable as there. Watching and questioning we

learned several things. Each of the brothers knew the history of his country—all historians falter when trying to define its origin—and was well informed as to its official routine. They leaned to the tradition that when Louis le Débonnaire passed that way, in 805, to lay siege to Seo de Urgel, the Andorrans gave him their aid and in return the French king gave them a charter which secured them in their rights to govern themselves. The Bishop of Urgel claimed ecclesiastical jurisdiction from the earliest days; this naturally including the collection of the tithes. This important and almost exclusive revenue having been settled, the remote little spot has never been considered worth fighting for, and so its insignificance and poverty have blessed it with independence and peace. Its early status was that of a suzerainty and such it has remained. The early overlordship of the Counts of Castellbo in Spain passed by marriage to the Counts of Foix in France, later to the Prince of Béarn, and finally is lodged to-day in the President of the French Republic. He shares the suzerainty with the Prince-Bishop of Urgel. In acknowledgment of this dual suzerainty and the protection it provides, Andorra pays an annual tribute of nine hundred and forty francs to the republic and four hundred and fifty francs to the Bishop. The twenty-four councilors are elected four from each parish, and they in turn elect a syndic who presides over their meetings. France and Urgel each appoint a *vignier,* or vicar, who, with their one *bayle*

each, administer the laws. The law cases are carried to the court of Perpignan, where an exception to the French language law is made so that the Andorran cases may be tried there in Catalan. The taxes were described as negligible. The Andorrans have neither coins nor stamps of their own. Such money as passes is Spanish. In 1881 they made an issue of their own postage stamps, but the effort was too great to survive beyond that single issue. Mail to or through Spain bears Spanish postage stamps; that to or through France bears French postage stamps. The possession of a rifle is not only permitted, it is enjoined upon the head of each household, and these *caps de casa,* some six hundred in number, form the militia of the country. But no one remembers that they have been called out since the Carlist war, nearly one hundred years ago, when the Spanish and French violated Andorran neutrality. One of the Andorran's rights is that if he marries in France and lives there, he and his children for three generations are free from French military service. The population is Roman Catholic without exception. The religious life is ministered to by two priests in each of the six parishes. In a civil sense each parish is self-governing under its own council or *comu,* whose principal duty is to carry each morning to the aged and poor a portion of bread and soup.

When we drifted on to the problems of existence, the padrones said that the greatest effort went into raising

grain by the waterside, tobacco on the terraced mountainsides, and to shepherding on certain high grassy pastures, but, it was added, "there are many smugglers." The word was used quite casually. Inside me somewhere, however, it repeated itself with a certain startling emphasis. Smugglers! I looked into the quiet simple faces about the store. I looked up at the smiling sky. Smugglers! I should not have been surprised if clouds had drifted before the sun, if darkness had suddenly settled down, if lightning had flashed and thunder had roared about the peaks, if trembling violins had begun a nervous crescendo, and drums had punctuated it with rolls and beats. Smugglers! I had heard this before but discredited it. Here it was asserted quite simply and definitely. Here smuggling is a profession. Here we were among them; among them, possibly face to face with them. Yet nothing was happening as it used to happen years ago in the melodrama, in mountain glens and robbers' caves, when smugglers came upon the scene. It was unreal in its reality, the collapse of a great tradition, disillusioning, as when, under the older dispensation, a child dared to do that which he was forbidden to do and the devil failed to materialize and seize him. Everything here remained quite as before, except that the chauffeur came in to announce that the hour for departure was at hand, and the padrones, possibly having divined my thoughts, reassuringly insisted we drink good-by in the Catalan fashion.

The Catalan in the Pyrenees has a drinking vessel unlike any other. It is a genuine loving-cup, as every one at the same table or in the same group drinks from it. Because no lips touch it, it is the only sanitary loving-cup so far devised. For water it is made of metal and is called a *canti;* for wine it is made of glass, and is called a *porro.* It is round like a bowl and closed at the top. There is a short hollow handle on one side through which the wine or water is poured into it, and on the opposite side there is a long delicate tapering stem from which the Catalan drinks. The drinker's lips touch no part of the vessel, he neither tastes nor swallows, yet he is refreshed by the liquid which jets in a thin arc from the high-held vessel's long stem with unerring precision into the open mouth and down the well-trained throat. It is said that to swallow would be to choke. Wine or water is rarely drunk from glasses or cups in these parts of the Pyrenees. A *porro* of wine adorns the dining table and every one present drinks from it at his inclination. The more expert the drinker the farther away he holds the vessel, and consequently the longer the arc of wine from the *porro* to the throat, and sometimes the women quite gracefully tighten their lips until it seems impossible the wine will find a way.

One of our new-found hosts raised the *porro,* with a toast "to America," and gave a faultless exhibition of how it should be drunk. Then he passed it to me and I raised it, a little diffidently, "to Andorra," and, fur-

ther, did exactly what every one of the natives about expected, exactly what any other than an expert will do when first he tries to drink in the Catalan fashion. The exhibition was received with good-natured laughter all around, and we parted better friends, if possible, for my failure.

By this time the cylinders were pounding a warning of departure, and the padrones and all their following, amiable and kindly every one, smugglers though they may have been, joined in a hearty farewell. The fat little concierge left her tubs again to wave good-by, and brought a coquettish little granddaughter whose comely olive skin and black eyes and hair gave promise of another Dulcinea for Andorran dons some day. A donkey or two strayed into the plaza for a drink at the fountain, before the Syndic's house, and the dogs naturally lost no such occasion to run about and jump up in the friendliest fashion. The boys who had greeted the coach had all come back and, as we roared out of the village, they ran alongside with much shouting, and when the speed of the engine was too great for their short legs they lagged behind and waved their caps in farewell, as Andorra Viella and they disappeared behind in the distance.

CHAPTER IX

From the Cerdagne to Foix

THE MOTOR ROAD FROM SEA TO SEA—THE PASS OF PUYMORENS—AIRPLANING ON EARTH—THE TRAIL OF CHARLEMAGNE—THE SOURCE OF WATERS FOR BOTH SEAS—AX-LES-THERMES—A TAFFY PULL IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE—INTERESTS OF THE ARIÈGE—FOIX—PRIMITIVE STREET SPRINKLING—CHÂTEAUX OF THE PYRENEES—THE COUNTS OF FOIX—GASTON PHŒBUS DE FOIX—CHÂTEAU LIFE IN FEUDAL DAYS.

After the republic of Andorra, the high valley of the Cerdagne, and the little cities of Puigcerda and Seo de Urgel, there is no further invitation to the Spanish side of the main range of the Pyrenees until, after seventy-four miles of central peaks, which the French call the *Massif Central,* it breaks for its descent into the Atlantic. Beyond Andorra no roads approach, much less cross, the line of peaks in that sector. The creature accommodations repel even the most venturesome traveler. The natural wonders are matched or surpassed on the more civilized and populous French slope. History follows man, and as he has generally shunned these regions, so one misses here the romances of history or the picturesque remains of former civilizations. The very names which attach to this land suggest the Inferno, for here are the Mountains of the Dead, the Hills of the Mouth of

Death, the Peaks of the Damned, Lost Mountain and the Peaks of Hell and of the Mouth of Hell. None of these central peaks has been dedicated, by the people who know them, to the good saints whom they associate with the blessings which they seek in this life and the next. Even the thrill-seeking Alpinists shun this forbidden land. Yet it is far from being an utter wilderness or from being entirely deserted. In the valleys along the ever-present streams there are habitations. The people scratch a little grain from the pockets of soil and squeeze a little wine from the terraced vineyards. No indictment lies against these hardy primitive folk. But, if it should be that their manners are not good, it is because the chances for corruption are against them in this remote land of particularly evil communications.

So we turned our backs on Spain temporarily, and at Bourg-Madame sought a segment of one of the most remarkable roads in the world, a highway which in Europe at least, is higher than any other of equal length and surface, a white ribbon near the sky, over which the motors fly from sea to sea, very near the crests of the peaks. It is called *La Route des Pyrénées,* the Pyrenean Road. We will pick it up several times on the way along the range to the ocean.

Although the air-line distance along the range, between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, measures two hundred and sixty-six miles, such are the curves and twistings of this road, in ferreting its way across the

mountains from valley to valley, from one great water to the other great water, and keeping always as near the summits as the irresistible barriers of nature will permit, that the paved way covers an actual distance of nearly five hundred miles.

French *tourisme* is properly proud of this road both as a triumph of engineering and as a toy for travelers. It touches most of the important resorts between Cap Cerbère and Biarritz, and includes nearly all the natural wonders. During the summer the railway of the Midi maintains a service of motor-coaches in each direction, which makes the length of the road in six days with nightly rests at the more famous places along the route. When a traveler has a fancy to remain in a particular region he may leave the coach and resume his journey by the coach of any subsequent day.

As for the general effect, there is no need, if indeed it were possible, to attempt to improve on the company's own *réclame*, written by a literary artist who can muster two graphic metaphors for the same subject, stand them side by side, and adroitly refrain from mixing them: "The motor-coach is a roofless, windowless, smokeless train. It is a set of fourteen orchestra stalls in front of Nature's stage, from which one views a film in six parts and some five hundred miles long."

The sector of this great road which we sought, in order to return to the French slopes of the range, is that which climbs the highest pass which wheeled vehicles

may cross between Spain and France. It is the Col de Puymorens. We took our so-called "orchestra stall" in the "roofless train" and the so-called film began to unroll.

To the east lay all the lovely French Cerdagne from Puigmal to the Rock of Font-Romeu. At our elbow was little Llivia, so that, though in France, for a few minutes we had Spain on both sides. We paralleled the tiny River Carol. A brace of ancient watch-towers on the mountain spur also bear the name of Carol. Ahead was the Pic de Carlitte. This repetition of the same name is a reminder that this way passed the armies of Charlemagne in 775, on their way to Saragossa, an early scene in that drama of Christian against Saracen, a later scene of which was enacted in the westerly pass near Roncevaux, and sung to immortality by the troubadours in *The Song of Roland.* The trail of Charlemagne runs everywhere in the Pyrenees. One of the sayings of the mountaineers is: "There are three great noises: that of the torrent, that of the wind in the pines, and that of the army of Charlemagne."

Mont Carlitte, however, has other than historic interest. It is the center of a nest of lakes, one of the largest clusters in the Pyrenees, and, like most other lakes in these mountains, they rest high up within a few hundred feet of the summit. Carlitte is the source of waters which flow in three directions, and reach both the ocean and the sea. Here springs the Tet which tumbles east-

Ax-les-Thermes

Foix, its rock and towers

ward and after a short course reaches the Mediterranean near Perpignan. From its west flank waters flow away to the Segre and worm among the Spanish mountains till they join the Ebro in its journey to the same sea below Barcelona. From the lakes to the north a torrent rushes down to the gay little Ariège, which greets Ax-les-Thermes and Tarascon and Foix as it hurries on to Toulouse, where it joins the Garonne and glides off to the Atlantic beyond Bordeaux. This is the most westerly source of Atlantic waters in these mountains, and it is less than fifty miles from the Mediterranean.

Where the road rises into the upper valley are two cold gray and black villages set in a treeless picture of tilted green pastures. They are Porta and Porté. Near Porta is the mouth of the tunnel which awaits the completion of the railway, from Puigcerda on the south and from Ax-les-Thermes on the north, to form a more direct all-rail route between Barcelona and Toulouse. The tunnel is a little more than three and a half miles long in a straight line under Puymorens. Near by on the high flank of the mountain are the ruins of the Tour de Cerdagne, heroic fragment of that line of wireless communication stations that stretched across this pass at least as early as the eleventh century. The green sweep of the Cerdagne is now locked off and the only perspective is up, toward the notched circle of the peaks of Sabarthè, Pédroux, Font Vive, Carlitte, Puncho, La Tosa and Campcardos. To the northwest the rim dips and there,

at an altitude of over six thousand feet, is the Col de Puymorens, the only spot where the high wall of the Pyrenees yields, and wheeled vehicles may roll across the range, until the Col de Pourtalet is reached south of Pau, over one hundred miles farther west.

There is no easy natural approach. No torrents or gorges show the way. The wall ahead is high and broad and seemingly vertical. On its face is sketched a zigzag line from side to side, bending on itself above dizzy precipices, always higher and higher, a projection on a larger scale of the footpath up the cliffs of Canigou to the Abbey of St. Martin. The sense of height increases with each perilous curve. As we rise the clouds seem to reach down. So fast we go, so far below is the dim dark valley seen over vertical walls which all but disappear from the foreground, that there is the detachment of flying. We seem to soar, and hover, and see the world below as with the eye of an eagle.

At the summit of Puymorens we were reminded of its altitude of over six thousand feet by the crisp chill wind that sported in these high places. But higher still by nearly four thousand feet were the misty peaks, their heads wrapped in cloudy chiffons, and their shoulders patched with snow pockets which the August sun had not found or had been powerless to dispel.

Had we but waited and watched we might have seen the mail airplanes pass between Toulouse and Morocco. One crosses the range just east of Carlitte, every day in

each direction. The southward flight requires a day and a half. The northward flight is made between sunup and sundown of the same day.

Instead the car rushed forward. The mountain peaks themselves were the vision of a moment as we plunged on, now down instead of up, the swirling course more terrifying than before, as the car raced at precipices, and caught itself, as we caught a faltering heart-beat, a foot or two from sheer space, and swung on its own track with a speed that was something more than quick and something less than kind. The village of l'Hospitalet seemed mockingly secure far, far below while we raced along these narrow unprotected shelves, nursing a cowardly hope that no unkind pebble would trick our wheels and cheat us of the eighteen inch security between them and space, between the horizontal and perpendicular, between us and our end. It seemed as if the car or the chauffeur or both had lost their heads, and we were all swirling in a mad dance of death. They were moments for faith. The driver knew what he was doing, but I did not.

Suddenly the car stopped. The spot was just above the village of l'Hospitalet, at the crossing of four historic lines. At the right was the boundary between the present *départements* of Pyrénées Orientales and Ariège, between the ancient Roussillon and old Languedoc. At the left a corner of Andorra dipped down from its sky pastures to the very roadside and was met by the boundary of the former domains of the Counts of Foix, those

great barons of feudal days who ruled along the northern slopes of the Pyrenees.

Two young men scrambled aboard. There was something familiar in the cut of their jib, something familiar in the cadence of their French. It hadn't quite the lilt of the Midi. A couple of leading questions and they stood confessed, Americans, collegians from Pennsylvania. They were the only Americans I saw in all these mountains. My tongue, too long limping on my own feeble French crutch, leaped to English, and I saw no more scenery until we dropped into Ax. They, too, were returning from Andorra, nursing mule-back bruises, having gone in, as they came out, by the rocky path over the Port d'Embalire, and complimented our sagacity in choosing the longer southern gateway, enjoying the Spanish towns, the valley of the Segre, and the Col de Puymorens.

By all the rules of the game Ax-les-Thermes should have looked good to us. It did as it welcomed us, a smiling little place on the banks of the Ariège, furbished up with some new buildings, that is to say buildings which were not there two or three or maybe four hundred years ago. On acquaintance, however, it revealed itself as a rather commonplace, well enough, second-class shoddy-genteel resort, with age and yet without significance, with almost no history and without any particular romance.

The springs are numerous, and at many points in the

town they boil out of the ground. Not all may be drunk and those which, though healing on outward application are poison when taken internally, are marked clearly and boldly. The waters of Ax bear indeed a considerable reputation among the "cure" seeking French, and if one is afflicted with any of the diseases which they cure, surely this is a proper place to come and a place to be remembered with gratitude. The dash down the flanks of Puymorens had, however, scared out all other troubles which may have had residence in my system, except the fear that we might detour to Ax via a thousand foot precipice instead of by the narrow but excellent road. With that fear gone my interest in other cures was not engrossing.

Life in Ax centers on a graveled square which might be shady if the trees were not cut back to mere trunks. On, or near, this *place* are the thermal establishments and a casino which houses a gambling room, a dance-hall and an indifferent theater. Much more attractive than the hospital building near by is the charitable thought behind the memory that Saint Louis built it for the lepers in his army of crusaders returned from Palestine, and, to this day, before it is the square stone pool where they bathed, if not entirely back to health again, at least it is to be hoped to some kind of comfort. The fumes of the boiling mineral waters permeate the air of the whole town, but, if one remains long enough, even that may be listed among the unbelievable things that custom makes

endurable. Surely boiling water is freer here than any place else in Europe. The maid at the hotel brought it always, fumes and all, when asked for shaving water. Presumably it is used for all domestic purposes and only the non-sulphurous water for cooking is made hot artificially.

Nothing else in Ax was so entertaining as the little comedy enacted each evening after sundown in a booth in the square, under the wall of the church of the St. Vincent who was murdered here in 452 by Attila the Hun. Little did the young comedians wot of that, however. The booth was an altar to old-fashioned taffy. It was presided over by a swarthy priest who swung the white strands on the big hook and by a priestess who spun them out to lead-pencil thinness and chopped them into ten, twenty-five and fifty centime values and, at the same time, exhibited a prodigious skill in ballyhooing their young audience and in raking in the coppers. It seemed as if all the youngsters of Ax came, after supper, for this sweet new-made dessert. They came early, and crowded close, and waited patiently, and devoured the great hunk of taffy with their longing eyes many times over before they devoured their meager ten centimes' worth with their mouths. Making just enough taffy every evening was an exact science with the couple in the booth and never did they have left-over stock, yet not once did I see them turn away a disappointed youngster.

Yes, Ax is good enough, it serves its purpose, it has

its loyal clientele, and its public taffy-pull for the children in the square was certainly a delight. We had entered expectantly, later interest faltered, and if we left without regret we left also without grudge. Often the interpretation of a place is only a revelation of the mood of the visitor. Perhaps another time I would find Ax of quite another sort.

Ax is at the fork of two important arteries of travel through the mountains. The Pyrenean Road turns west at this point, and hurdles the mountain buttresses of the main range until it finds its finish at Biarritz. Another good road, the railroad and the river Ariège lock arms and, like three jolly mountain-musketeers, rollick off northward to Foix and Toulouse. We set off this way for Foix.

Perhaps, after all, the chief difficulty with Ax was Foix. The latter was our objective, the former was but a mile-post. There was, however, one other mile-post, a little farther down the valley of this laughing river, which filled the eye and seized the imagination. That was the ruined château of Lordat on a rock eleven hundred feet above the road. This was one of the most formidable of all the fortresses of the Counts of Foix. It was enclosed in four walls. Carcassonne had but two. Most châteaux and cities depended on only one. It is a superb sight from afar. Close up it is pathetic in its decay but eloquent still of its former might. Behind Lordat and higher up in the mountains are the quarries of

Trimouns, the largest chalk deposit in the world. We preferred to take the talc of Trimouns out of a tin after shaving than out of a mountain, after the more picturesque glory of Lordat. So we climbed that mountain, in the easiest manner yet invented, with the eye. We stood at the base and looked up.

It was not difficult either to decline an invitation to visit the grotto of Lombrive. Its *réclame* recites that here in the days of the Midi crusade, in 1328, between five and six hundred Albigensians, with at least as much heroism as heresy, followed their bishop into the subterranean cavern, immured themselves there, and starved to death rather than come out and submit to the possibilities of the Inquisition. The bones of these self-inflicted martyrs are exhibited as evidence, but so far as we were concerned without enticement. The tale itself conveyed sufficient horror. Beyond we slipped through Tarascon, with homage for its sweet old-worldliness, but with regret that it was not the Tarascon of the invincible, incredible Tartarin. It was, however, a brief regret, for presently all other considerations were sent packing as ahead rose the rock of Foix, with its three towers.

Foix would be unique among Pyrenean towns if for no other reason than because it has no healing waters, no boiling springs, no thermal establishment. It makes no pretense as a resort. Nothing is proclaimed about its importance to the Romans, though there is no doubt of it.

History, at least history as retailed at Foix, ignores anything that may have happened here before Charlemagne passed by twelve centuries ago, and founded an oratory here.

Its seven thousand inhabitants rank it as more considerable in size than any other city we had seen since Perpignan. Yet it is a simple old town, advantaging itself of some breadth of valley to spread over the whole angle between the Rivers Arget and Ariège. It is wholly commercial in spirit, but here the commercial spirit is not strenuous, and it is apparently oblivious of what may be made out of tourists.

We entered the town hungry and were delighted to find a certain balcony, hanging over the Ariège at the end of the bridge. It was a shady balcony where, at least when we visited it, a civil *vivandière,* with eyes that shot lightning and a tongue that rippled, made such rugged food as sandwiches and beer seem worth lingering over and coming back for many times. It was easy to leave the queer church of St. Volusien, incomplete after half a thousand years, and much mutilated in what has been achieved. It has fine points, yet it left us cold on a breathlessly hot August afternoon; cold, but not refreshed, as we were when coming suddenly and unadvised upon the wall-fountain of the Swan, as fine a decorative detail as one may hope for anywhere.

In Foix's narrow winding streets we found again a method of street-sprinkling which we had thought was

Perpignan's very own. When the heat or the dust become intolerable, the men and women and boys and girls come out of the shops with wooden shovels and brooms of stout twigs and, straddling the gutters of running water, either scoop it or sweep it over the dust and cobbles of the street.

Where modern Foix has most exerted itself, in the creation of the Promenade de Villotte, it does itself least justice. But if this park is lacking in appeal to the stranger it appears to make an immense appeal to its own people, for there, under immense platanes, the old ladies occupied every bench and knitted and mended and chatted the afternoon away in a most comfortable leisurely manner. After dinner when the lights and the band came out, the promenade seemed magnetic to every soul in town. As always, that was the hour of youth.

But with all else seen and said Foix's claim upon attention centers on the line of counts who made history here from the eleventh to the fifteenth century, and on the château and the towers they left upon the isolated rock which rises sheer from the floor of the river valley.

There are fifty châteaux in the *départements* on the French flank of the Pyrenees. They are more ancient all than the better known and better preserved châteaux of the Loire, and unlike them as the savage mountain valleys on this warlike southern frontier are unlike the peaceful smiling fields of the north. The châteaux along the Loire were the comparatively modern houses of the

royal families of France whose center was near-by Paris. The châteaux of the Pyrenees were feudal strongholds, the homes of independent barons, on a wild and fluctuating frontier, where every chief's hand seems at one time or another to have been at the throat of his neighbor, and where they found security only on an unscalable elevation, behind impregnable walls. The châteaux of the Loire have the fineness and delicacy of a lady's glove in comparison with these mailed fists of the mountains.

Foix is, in fact, the center of a neighborhood whose mountain sides are particularly rich in picturesque remains of these fortified castles of the southern barons. Among those near by, and best worth visiting, are Roguefixade, Montsegur, Castelsarrassin, Carla-de-Roquefort, Montferrier, Amont and Tarascon. Of all France's châteaux along the Pyrenees those of Pau and Carcassonne and Foix are the only ones that are less than ruins. Of these, Pau is comparatively modern but the most complete. That of Carcassonne, the most venerable, is subordinated to the overwhelming interest in the double cinctured city with its many towers.

The château of Foix, however, has a peculiar individuality, alone and aloft, and well enough preserved to indicate the life of the medieval chieftains who made it their home. Cobbled ramps zigzag up the east face of the rock with widening panoramas at every turn. At the top rise the crenellated walls of the château, between two huge square fortified towers, and detached, but ad-

jacent, is the round donjon tower, tallest of the three. The first lords of Foix were the abbots of the monastery of St. Volusien, which grew up around the original oratory below on the banks of the river. Foix in those days gave its allegiance to neighboring Carcassonne. In the early days of the tenth century Bernard Roger built the first château, and his son declared his independence and assumed the title of the Count of Foix.

That family became one of the most extraordinary in all France, its leaders being equally distinguished as warriors and poets. They defied the king of France whom they refused to regard as more than equal, and they were excommunicated by the Pope who regarded them as heretics. As heretics they, also, naturally drew the attention of the exterminating sword of Simon de Montfort. This terror of the Midi came here in the year 1210 and settled his army for a siege of the château on the rock. A French wag on the spot when we, not Simon, were there, remarked that this was a case of "*Montfort contre fort mont,*" a fair enough phrase for Greek meets Greek. But de Montfort had only loss and disaster for his effort. In leaving he threatened to come back and "make the rock melt like tallow." However, he never returned.

Curiously this fate, without the same premonitory threat, was nearly visited on the rock toward the end of the same century by the king of France, then Philip the Bold. Stung by the defiance of the Counts of Foix,

he brought his army here to capture the castle at any cost. But his patience was not so rugged as the rock. Finally he undertook a bold stroke, not to be believed possible in those days before dynamite. He determined to throw down the enormous granite hill which his troops could not capture. His miners and sappers began their task and the besieged count above, fearing the destruction of his stronghold, came down and made terms with the monarch.

All the fighting of the Counts of Foix was not, however, on this rock. It is a little surprising to find them faring and fighting far in many directions. One of the line of Bernard Roger led his men north into Prussia and another fought even farther off with Philip Augustus in Palestine. These reached home in time to die there. But not all of them took this precaution. Gaston I died returning from a war in Flanders, and his son, Gaston II, roamed off across the Pyrenees to fight in Spain and died in Seville.

The saddest death in all the chronicles of the house of Foix, however, was that of the son of great Gaston Phœbus. This count, celebrated by Froissart, supposing his son was in league to poison him, prevented the supposed patricide by the incredible expedient of poisoning the boy. The chronicle of this tragedy is one of the most vivid of all the stories that Froissart tells out of his experience in the lands along the Pyrenees.

At the end of the thirteenth century the reigning

Count of Foix was married to the neighboring Princess of Béarn and thus he extended his control as far west as Orthez beyond Pau. Thereafter the château of Foix ceased to be the residence in chief and the counts built and dwelt in and defended châteaux at Mazères, Pau and Orthez.

The amiable concierge who met us at the arched gate and climbed the remaining ramps and, with dates and names and anecdotes, made that climb and all the climbing and meandering about the château and walls and towers so easy, confessed the square towers so far back in history that she believed no one knew which count had builded them. Certainly she did not, which appeared a satisfactory conclusion, to her. When she crossed the courtyard to the round tower, however, she patted it affectionately, and said, with an assurance tinged with that same affection, "But this the great Gaston built. What a hero!"

What a hero indeed, if one may believe, as many do and she no doubt among them, the homage of Sir John Froissart. He wrote of Gaston Phœbus after a visit to him in 1388 at another of his seats than Foix, but the picture of the man, and the manners and the magnificence attending him, was probably not far from characteristic of many of the medieval barons of his class and especially of his clan in this and others of the now more mutilated châteaux of the Pyrenees.

Sir John was riding west from Carcassonne, when in

the valley just north of the Château de Foix, he fell in with a knight of the Comte de Foix, who, "after saying his oraisons," entered freely into conversation as their steeds jogged on. We do not often call them steeds today but surely in those days a chronicler and a knight could not be said to have mounted, much less ridden, anything so commonplace as a horse. Here is a scrap of their conversation verbatim as recorded by Sir John:

"Has the Count de Foix much wealth?" said I to my companion.

"By my faith," he replied, "the count has at this moment a hundred thousand florins thirty times told; and there is not a year but he gives away sixty thousand, for a more liberal lord in making presents does not exist."

"To whom does he make them?"

"To strangers, to knights and squires, who travel through his country, to heralds, minstrels—indeed to all who converse with him; none leave him without a present."

"Holy Mary!" cried I, "are his revenues so great as to supply him with such a sum?"

"The Count de Foix," replied the knight, "has been induced to collect so large a sum of money because he was continually expecting war with the Count d'Armagnac, and also doubtful of the manoeuvres of his neighbors, the kings of France and England. Moreover, when the Prince of Wales was in Aquitaine he threatened the count that he would make him do homage for the county of Béarn, and on this account, also, he began to amass large sums of money, in order to defend himself should he be attacked. He imposed heavy taxes on the country and on all the towns. Each hearth pays two francs per annum, and in this he has found and still finds a mine of wealth; for it is marvelous how cheerfully his subjects pay it. His whole country is well protected, and justice administered, for in matters of justice he is the most severe and upright lord existing."

Froissart became the guest of Count Gaston Phœbus, and wrote of him, at the age of fifty-nine, as the handsomest man among all the "knights, squires, kings and princes" that ever he had seen. He was prudent, surrounded himself with men of good character, and was constant at his devotions.

There were regular nocturnals from the Psalter, prayers from the rituals to the Virgin, to the Holy Ghost, and from the Burial Service. He had, every day, distributed, as alms at his gate five florins, in small coin, to all comers. He was liberal and courteous in his gifts, and well knew how to take and how to give back. He loved dogs above all other animals; and during summer and winter amused himself much with hunting. He never indulged in any foolish works or ridiculous extravagances, and took account every month of the amount of his expenditure. He chose twelve of the most able of his subjects to receive and administer his finances, two serving two months each, and one of them acting as comptroller. He had certain coffers in his apartment whence he took money to give to different knights, squires, or gentlemen, when they came to wait on him, for none ever left without a gift.

He was easy of access to all, and entered very freely into discourse, though laconic in his advice and in his answers. He employed four secretaries to write and copy his letters, and these were to be in readiness as soon as he left the room. He called them neither John, Walter, nor William, but his good-for-nothings, to whom he gave his letters, after he had read them, to copy or to do anything else which he might command.

In such manner lived the Count de Foix. When he quitted his chamber at midnight for supper, twelve servants bore each a lighted torch before him. The hall was full of knights and squires, and there were plenty of tables laid out for any who chose to sup. No one spoke to him at table unless he first began the conversation. He ate heartily of poultry, but only the wings and thighs. He had great pleasure in hearing minstrels, being himself

a proficient in the science. He remained at table about two hours, and was pleased whenever fanciful dishes were served up to him—not that he desired to partake of them, but, having seen them, he immediately sent them to the tables of the knights and squires.

In short, everything considered, though I had before been in several courts, I never was at one which pleased me more, nor was anywhere more delighted with feats of arms. Knights and squires were to be seen in every chamber, hall and court, conversing on arms and armor. Everything honorable was to be found there. All intelligence from distant countries was there to be learned; for the gallantry of the count had brought together visitors from all parts of the world.

The most modern of the three towers of Foix, that one which is attributed to the fourteenth century and to Gaston Phœbus, is full fifty feet in diameter, with walls quite ten feet thick, a donjon in the foundation rocks and room on room connected by a circular stairway built in a well enclosed partly in the wall. Though all that is dark and cold, suggestive of combat and cruelty, these steps lead to a platform which yields one of the fairest prospects in the lower Pyrenees. The foreground, below the sometimes moss-grown and ivy-hung walls, is aglow with the mottled pink tiles of the little city. The rolling hillsides are green to their crests and back of them the darker mountains rise to gray summits lightened with occasional snow patches. The valleys open in all directions and the white roadways run away south to Tarascon and Ax; east to Quillan and Carcassonne; north to Pamiers and Toulouse; and westward to St-Girons and the baths of Luchon.

The pleasing prospect was made pleasanter still by the amiable garrulous concierge whose information was endless on every house and hill, on every rock and road and river, and just a speck too glib and piquant to be entirely credible until confirmed. That I could not do, understanding only a part of her thick Midi accent and forgetting nearly all that fragment that I understood, but not forgetting her.

While we looked off the church bells about the town sent up the message of the hour, one of them a trifle cracked but not the less willing, as if an old servant with a pleasant feeble voice. They silenced the good concierge for a moment, but her lips continued to move, and no doubt the pious soul had paused for an Ave Maria. Her silence, and the bells, and the prospect, yielded a moment which remains fixed.

CHAPTER X

Along the Foot-hills

ALONG THE FOOT-HILLS—WESTWARD ON THE LOWER ROADS FROM FOIX TO PAU—THE TROUBADOURS—THE SINGING PYRENEES—A COMMUNICATIVE PASSENGER—EPIGRAMMATIC COURTSHIP—A TRIANGULAR FLIRTATION—A TEMPERAMENTAL TRAIN—THE TOWN OF ST-GIRONS AND THE CHÂTEAU OF ST-LIZIER—THE COMB OF ST. VIDIAN—ST-BERTRAND-DE-COMMINGES—A VANISHED ROMAN METROPOLIS—A CHURCH WITHIN A CHURCH—MINIATURE MONKS—A CLOISTER PROCESSION—COMPARTMENT COMPANIONS—WHAT APPEARANCES DID NOT TELL.

From the Château of Foix the encircling mountains may be seen to open to the north, quite narrowly, with just the breadth for those three inseparable companions—the river, the road and the railway—to march abreast. But, through this opening, I caught a glimpse of a somewhat level plain, and, after all the vertical landscapes of the preceding weeks, it gave me a pleasant surprise, as of the sudden remembrance of a forgotten something, or of an old friend it was good to see again. It was, of course, only a renewed evidence of that trite truism of travel, that, after all, interest and pleasure is in direct proportion to contrast. One goes from home to extend experience, to relieve a tired eye of familiar objects and people, the city man to the country, the plains-

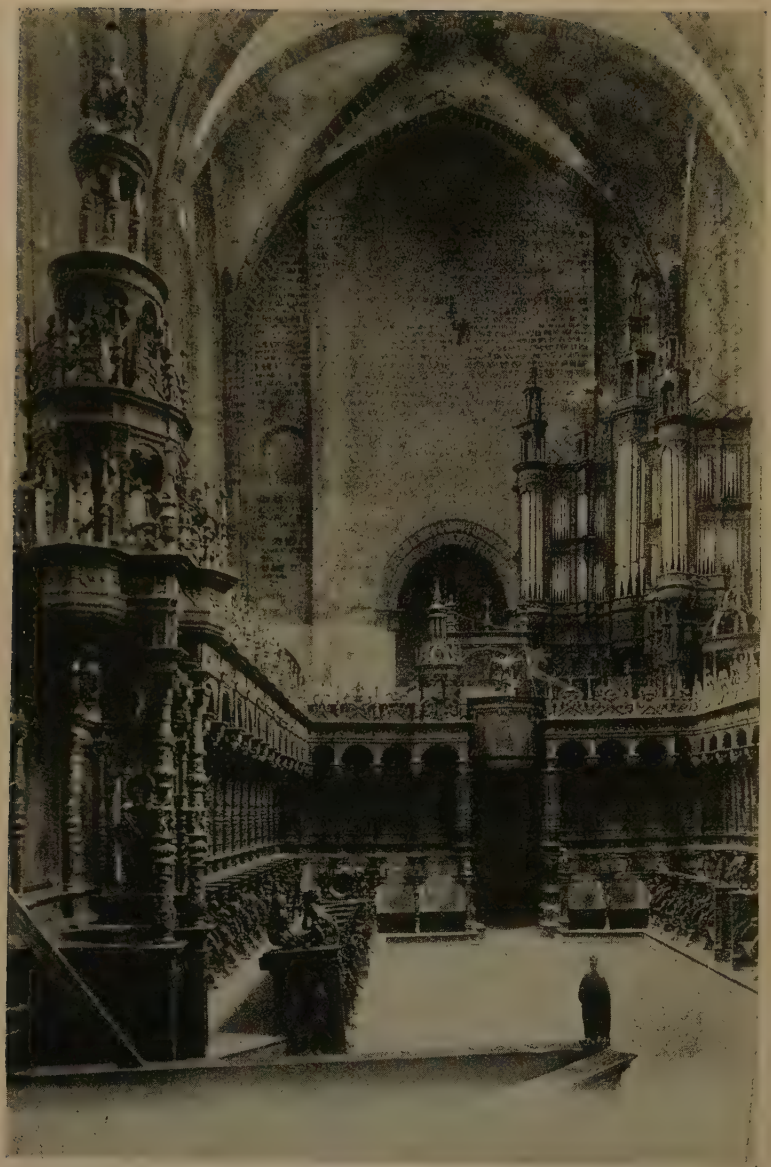
man to the mountains, the mountaineer to the sea, the American to Europe, the occidental to the Orient.

It was such an outlook, and such considerations as these, that determined our further movement to the westward. Our next objective was that portion of the range which lies in the *département* of Hautes-Pyrénées. The name is exactly descriptive for there are the highest peaks, the giants of the range. Roundabout are some of its most interesting natural wonders, historic monuments, and human expressions. Close under its summits are, too, the largest and gayest spas of these mountains.

Two routes offered themselves in that direction. One was the middle sector of the Pyrenean Road, over which the motor threads its way across certain passes which rival the unpaved *cols* and *ports* over the international barrier, with very little human association, except for the companionship of those in the car itself. The other way parallels this one, generally four or five miles to the north of it, through the milder valleys of the lesser mountains, the two routes even meeting, as at St-Girons.

The latter, instead of epic wilderness, offered thickly peopled reaches; instead of hamlets, clinging miraculously to the crags, it promised the livelier companionship of such towns as St-Girons, St-Lizier, St-Gaudens and Tarbes, with Pau at the end, and never-to-be-missed St-Bertrand-de-Comminges somewhere on the way. As our objective in the high Pyrenees was the extraordinary

The Cathedral of St-Bertrand-de-Comminges supported above its village



The choir and organ in St-Bertrand-de-Comminges

and miraculous, it did seem a bit anti-climactic to seek lesser expressions of the same things en route. Moreover the motor-coach whisks one so suddenly to destination. A leisurely little train, rolling away through the opening, toward the lowlands, seemed to invite to just the needed contrast after the remote and rugged excursions of the recent past and in preparation for the expected magnificence to follow. Assuredly novelty now lay in the compartment of a railway carriage with frequent stops; and the eye, saturated with the austere perpendicular, would delight in green levels, or comparative levels.

So we argued ourselves on to a train and off to the west, without schedule, willing to meet interest and adventure half-way at any stage. It proved a trip of many temptations, for, at each of the principal stops, it required constancy not to turn off to the south, on one of the many branches which lead off from the parent vine, up some mysterious valley, toward some beckoning scenic glory. But, for the most part, such side trips were but pleasures deferred, to be undertaken later, from another direction.

The pace was decidedly more leisurely. The pleasant cultivated country was rather soothing than stimulating, so that for a time we found our thoughts our best companions. When we talked it was of the long procession of worthies who, through the centuries, had followed the easy grades of the white roadways that reached along

our way. No one knows who first peopled these parts. When history picked up the Pyrenees these valleys were already old in habitations. This way marched the Romans, the legions of Charlemagne, the Visigoths, the Saracens, and the crusading armies of the Albigensian wars. These were the very hills along which Froissart rode when he fell in with that knight attached to the Count de Foix, who gave him the details which have immortalized Gaston Phœbus.

It is again the land of Languedoc, and among these hills, too, rode the troubadours and their jongleurs, from castle to castle, seeking a patron and singing their lays of love and "ladys faire." It is even possible to recall some of them by name. This way passed that Guillem de Capestang, whose roasted heart furnished such ghastly fare for the chatelaine of the Castel Rossilho; Folquet, who began life as a troubadour, but found love a cruel mistress, and finished as the battling bishop of Toulouse; and, strangest and maddest of all the troubadours, Pierre Vidal, son of the Toulouse furrier, who sang a love in every land from the Cerdagne to Palestine, and made the lovely Loba of Carcassonne to be remembered as the lady for whom he took the wolf as his device, since her name meant she-wolf, and put on a wolf's skin and invited the shepherds of these hills to hunt him with their dogs.

These were individual immortals among the many troubadours, and in the lyric times which caused this

land to be called "the singing Pyrenees." Raimon Vidal summed up the part played by poetry in the life here, and in those days, when he declared: "The kings, dukes, counts, viscounts, commanders, vassals and other knights, citizens, and peasants, tall and little, daily give their minds to singing and verse-making, by either singing themselves or listening to others. No place is so deserted or out of the way that, as long as men inhabit it, songs are not sung by single persons or by many together; even the shepherds in the mountains know no greater joy than song. All good and evil things in the world are made known by the troubadours, and no evil talk, that has once been put into rhyme and verse by a troubadour, fails to be repeated every day."

As the train rolled along and we talked of these things, at the time rather questioningly and with the timidity of not being as certain as we would have liked, an element of authority and real information was furnished by a French gentleman in the same compartment. He admitted himself an editor. He spoke in an English far less lame than our poor French, and added a pleasant courtesy and a genuine scholarship. In addition to much general information he made our enjoyment richer by actually repeating in old Provençal, and translating into French, and then into English, the epigrammatic verses of one certain troubadour's dialogue with his lady, whose knight he fain would be. The poet told of his heart's sickness, and how his lady was of such great sta-

tion, and he so unworthy, that he dared not tell her his love lest her refusal kill him, albeit he should else die of the fulness of his unspoken love. "Then," said the lady, "by all means tell her." "Then," confessed the troubadour, "you are my lady." "Then," replied the lady, "you are my knight." Than which few instances of courtship are simpler or briefer.

Other tales he told and he recited other verses, and I have tried to recall them or to find traces of them, but can not, except the incident of the three wooers of the Lady Guillelma, which, as he hinted, is set out in the biographies of the Provençal troubadours. This lady was the Viscountess of Benaujatz, and to her castle came Savaric de Mauleon, Sir Elias Rudel of Bergerac and Jaufre Rudel of Blaia. Now when these three troubadours met neither knew that the others sought the love of Guillelma. They gathered about her, one on each side and one before her. Each of the poets gazed right lovingly into the eyes of the lady, and she, with astonishing boldness, gave each encouragement in a different fashion. Her eyes returned the loving glances of Sir Jaufre for he was sitting in front of her. Taking the hand of the Lord of Bergerac on one side she pressed it amorously, and with her foot she pressed the foot of Sir Saveric on the other side, at the same time sighing and smiling right encouragingly. None of the wooers knew of the favors the other had received until they compared notes in riding away from the castle. Savaric put the discussion as to

which of the three had met with most favor into a poem, but the decision, which it would have been so interesting to know, was, if any was ever made, unfortunately not preserved.

In the one hundred and forty-two miles of meandering between Foix and Pau I counted the ruins of twenty-five châteaux, nearly all of them relics of the Middle Ages. They were sacrificed to the havoc wrought along the Pyrenees by the wars for and against the house of Foix, by the Albigensian wars, by Louis XI in his effort to extend the frontier of France, by Richelieu during the Reformation, and finally by the rage of the Revolutionists against the land-holding aristocracy. But somehow our journalist had for the hour made this so completely the land of the troubadours that we ignored their sterner histories and the crumbling walls on the hills along our way became but the frames of imagined pictures of those lyric days when each château was the theater of some troubadour's song and some jongleur's singing.

As far as St-Girons the valley is made on the south side by the lower mountains of the range, and on the north by a long low lateral range of hills, called the Montagnes du Plantaurel or, sometimes, the Little Pyrenees. But all the way to Pau the railway winds among the smilingest landscapes, the monticules rarely reaching above three thousand feet, their tops round and easy to reach, green with trees or grain or vineyards, watered with torrents which come swollen and urgent from the

snows of the farther summits. Only at Tarbes and Pau does the line drift so far as thirty miles from the peaks and for the most part they are not more than fifteen miles away. But if they are near, they are only occasionally in sight, appearing and disappearing unexpectedly, suddenly, as if playing hide-and-seek with the traveler in the foot-hills. From a distance we reviewed nearly every great peak in the range: from St-Lizier loomed the lovely unchallenged Montvallier; from St-Gaudens the horizon line includes the Maladetta group all of which are in Spain; at Tarbes appear the Pic de Montaigu, the Pic d'Arbizon and the conical Pic du Midi de Bigorre; and at Pau was enjoyed the most celebrated view along the whole range.

We stopped at so many places it was necessary to take local trains. These lacked the speed and splendor of an express, but more than made up by the democracy of the southerners who shared our compartment from time to time, and recompensed us in advice and information, and, in general, a hearty fellowship that made it hard to believe that any other part of France is so agreeable to travel in. Every one seemed to know every one else, and the great business of life seemed to be greeting and conversation. Every station was a stop. Every stop was a social occasion. The passengers hung out of the windows, and the stay-at-homes lounged along the platform and greeted and gossiped, the gay ones laughed a good deal, and the sentimental ones dropped a few

tears. It seemed, nearly always, as if more time were spent at the stations than between them.

As for the little toy trains themselves, each one of them was temperamental and erratic and casual in an entirely ingratiating way. One train in particular, rattling along between two stops on the Foix and St-Girons sector, behaved in a manner that left much to be explained. It would amble along for a few miles as if leisure were its whole portion in life. Then suddenly, and for no apparent reason, it would rush off in a burst of equally mysterious speed, only after each spasm to revert again to a crawl; on the whole much like a dog who trots by the roadside, absorbed in his own thoughts, sees a speeding vehicle, rushes out to pace it, tires of that futility, and returns to his ambling gait and renewed meditations. But soon repeats the performance.

We planned to stop at St-Girons, apparently because the name appeared in such large letters on the map. Our strolls about this simple market town disclosed nothing, as an Englishman would say, to write home about. It sits agreeably on both banks of the River Salat, whose waters rise just south in the flanks of Mont Rouch de France. That is a twin peak whose other crest is Mont Rouch d'Espagne, with the international boundary between them at nine thousand feet, and nearly as many feet below burrows the tunnel which is to carry the trains of another railway between Toulouse and Barcelona.

What pleased me most about St-Girons were the

neighborly excursions and a little café which we made our own, not so much because of the food or the wine, but because of a card in the window which modestly proclaimed it a *Salon pour Société.* That assuredly is what all French cafés exist for, yet here was the only one I ever saw with the understanding, or the courage, to declare it. About its metal tables were planned several admirable walks, especially one up the Salat and, later, a little way up the Alet, to the Valley of Ustou, where have been trained all those dancing bears which for generations have journeyed out of the Pyrenees, across Europe and across the seas, to delight the children of many lands and fill the coin-cups of the mountaineers who fare with them.

The proprietor of the *Salon pour Société* was a gay smiling host as a rule; but, when asked a question, he reverted to a state of mental process, and his face became a terrible object. However, the cloud or the paroxysm or whatever it was, was only momentary, and he came out from under with a smile that was all the more resplendent for the contrast and, what was more important, he came out with the information, too. He suggested the short walk down the river to the town of St-Lizier, to see the cathedral and the episcopal palace, both on the top of a great rock, but he withheld a bit of significant information, and, thereby, provided us with a totally unexpected dénouement.

Afoot is surely the properest way to approach these

old towns. There is kinship with the road and the people and the river, and, from watching the castle and the towers ahead, one establishes an acquaintance and finally a kind of intimacy with them even before arriving. This way there is none of the noise and hurry and confusion of a railroad station, no importuning hotel porters and insisting drivers. This way, too, one pauses midway of the bridge to watch the pounding foaming Salat and to look up along its white line, over green foot-hills, at the serene sunlit Montvallier. Once across the bridge one is snared in a maze of winding crooked streets, ramps really, with flanking houses which reach as far as the palace which crowns the hill.

On the terrace of the palace we paused for breath and for the wide flung view before entering. Below was the little cathedral which in ascending seemed so near the top, and we looked down even on its octagonal pink tower so reminiscent of its great brothers up at Toulouse. Below that huddled the town, exposing nothing to this outlook but soft brown tiled roofs, a confusion of jangled angles, like bricks thrown in a heap, a cubist study of "a village descending a hillside." Beyond were alternating rectangles of green and golden fields and behind them the gray and purple mountains.

The palace is descended from a long line of bishops who were indeed princes, and ruled the civil destinies of their diocese until the Revolution. One of these bishops, defending his city against besieging Saracens, was

obliged to surrender. In that situation he used a curious subterfuge, but he gained little by it probably except a few hours' delay. The Saracen chief demanded the key of the city gates. The bishop sent it. Later, when the invaders sought to enter, they found they had been given a key of wax.

We had understood, or more properly misunderstood, that the palace is now an old peoples' home. The terrace was in fact alive with the inmates, pathetic glowering figures, some pacing slowly back and forth, some asleep on the packed earth under the shade trees, some leaning on the wall and gazing off a little enigmatically into the distance. Among them, a bundle of rags, barefoot, huddling in an angle of the wall, cooking in the sunshine, was as perfect a Virginia nigger as ever hoed a cornfield. But, like it as he looked, he had probably never been nearer the Potomac than Senegal, and knew nothing of corn-pone or yams or midsummer watermelons. We were about to ask permission to enter the palace, especially to see the primitive cathedral, which is now surrounded by the later buildings, when a chance inquiry disclosed the true character of the place and its people. We had come to see a castle and had arrived in a madhouse. We were surrounded by maniacs. The way down the hill was no distance at all.

From St-Lizier the train burrowed on another dozen miles to Boussens, always northward, but on the way it had to submit to so much interference, by mere thousand-

foot hills, that it scampered in all directions like a frightened animal. Boussens is the junction with the main line between Toulouse and Pau and Bayonne. But it is a junction also of walks that lead a little way south to the picturesque ruins of the Château Roquefort and northward another two miles to the village of Martres.

Martres is a pottery town whose chimneys send out smoke by day and sparks by night in imitation of the chimneys of middle England, and it might easily have been consigned to the omnibus chamber of things forgotten had it not been for a young seminarian whom we found sharing our interest in the octagonal Toulousan tower of the church. He was richly bestowed with anecdote about this neighborhood, about the Roman remains discovered there and now in the museum at Toulouse, about the villages in these parts, and especially about St. Vidian, one of Charlemagne's captains, who died saving the town from the Moors who came across the Pyrenees and were halted by him on their way to seize Toulouse. He would have led us inside to the chapel where he said is preserved the comb with which the saintly knight arranged his then fashionably long hair, but the church was closed. His account of the theft of the comb of St. Vidian, as we stood in the shadow of the cool old church, was compensation enough for the time and effort devoted to coming, even if we did not see the comb.

In the remote days of greater faith than now, when, according to the young ecclesiastic, miracles were so

much more a commonplace of mortal lives, there came to the fair at Martres, on St. Vidian's Day, a peasant and his wife from the neighboring canton of Cazères. Happening into the church at a time when every one else in town was in the market-place, the woman succumbed to an evil impulse and stole the comb of the saintly paladin. With the miraculous treasure under her cloak she rejoined her husband and at nightfall they set out, down the valley of the Garonne, for their home.

Not a word did she say of her theft. Indeed her man found her uncommonly silent on all topics, which was probably a blessing not to be complained of. Plodding on in the darkness and silence, they had barely crossed the boundary between Martres and Cazères when the man was startled by a cry, looked about to discover he was alone, and turning back found his wife transfixed in the middle of the road, one foot in the canton of Martres and the other in the canton of Cazères, riveted to the spot by some inscrutable force, absolutely unable to budge.

The seminarian made much of the unfortunate woman's plight and of the effort to move her. At first her husband pushed and pulled, begged and threatened, but all in vain. Then in the shadows appeared a carter with a team of oxen. She clutched the tail of the cart and the oxen were whipped up, but it was likelier that her arms would be pulled out of their sockets than that her feet would leave the ground. When the carter passed on they heard the approach of tinkling bells, and three Span-

iards appeared with their three gaily decorated mules. She was given the reins of the three mules and they renewed the effort in which the oxen had failed, but with the same result. When the Spaniards rode on, the terror-stricken pair, alone in the night, conferred, and finally the wretched woman confessed her sacrilege.

Thereupon her husband sent into Martres for clerical aid in their dilemma. The curé and his flock were closing St. Vidian's Day in the church before his very shrine. At once they took the blazing tapers to light their way and, with banners and cross and holy water, proceeded to find the woman and to exorcise the devil who undoubtedly possessed her. But, on the arrival of the procession, and before cross or prayer had played its part, the woman openly confessed her theft and delivered up the comb to the priest, and instantly her feet were freed. Of course she and her husband disappeared in the darkness, but the procession bore the precious comb back to its shrine to be an object of greater veneration than ever.

The middle sector of this trip along the lower reaches of the Pyrenees is the most beautiful that the Garonne waters on all its way, and it is exciting even from a car window. For one thing one turns southward again and in a westerly way follows up the valley of this important stream directly to Montréjeau. One meets and parts with villages and ruins faster than the eye, or at least the memory, can take account of them. As Boussens trailed out of sight the Château of Montpezat came toward us on

a hill, where the little Salat brings its offering to the great Garonne, all green grown and peaceful, as if, having done its job, it had folded its hands and was disposed to let the world wag. Nearer the little city of St-Gaudens, the ruins of the Château of Montespan, new in the thirteenth century, crown a detached hill whose sides are thickly forested to the top, so that the old square donjon seems not to have its foundations in the earth at all but to be supported by the tree-tops. One of the chatelaines of this castle wrote her name large in the history of the French court. In the reign of the Grande Monarque it was still the seat of the noble family which bore the title de Montespan. Here lived Louis, Marquis de Montespan, and his wife was the Athenais de Montespan who was mistress of Louis XIV, and the rival of the celebrated Louise de la Vallière.

Following a branch line from Montréjeau, some three miles along the Garonne into the long valley that leads to its source in the peaks just above, one finds, beyond the mouth, locked in by protecting hills, a little grass pocket, only a few miles across, which seems to have been arranged by nature as a setting for the isolated rock on which rises the village of St-Bertrand-de-Comminges, holding to heaven, as if on uplifted hands, the superb cathedral of Notre Dame. The pilgrimage to this valley is one that recommends itself if only for the externals that meet the eye. The interest multiplies, however, as the imagination is fed with the astonishing facts of its

past. It is on one of the most traveled routes of the Pyrenees, for along the river runs the road which forks above to the east to the Vall d'Aran and south up to the queen of these mountain spas, the Bagnères-de-Luchon.

It was a mere happy chance that put us down here, at a cluster of houses called Labroquère, on a midsummer Sunday morning. St-Bertrand was two miles to the west. There was no conveyance, happily, for the walk provides the way properly to approach the site of the great Roman metropolis. It was a still hot day when the sun was rather pitiless on pedestrians, and only the insects seemed alive. Half way across the valley we came upon the village of Volcabrère, a single bending street, wrapped in Sabbath dullness. Two citizens only exposed themselves. One was the village street-cleaner, with his rough brown broom of twigs, who swept and brushed and gathered and dusted as if he were competing for a national street-cleaning prize and all the eyes of France were upon him. The other was a simple middle-aged peasant woman, in black of course, crouched on a stool before her door. She was absorbed in a book spread on her knees. I made an inquiry as to the road to the church of St. Just, an excuse to stop and engage her, and if possible glimpse what her book might be. There was no mistaking the bold type and the woodcuts. It was the catalogue of a Paris mail-order house, open at the offerings of the latest fashions. The eternal feminine. And she probably hadn't a sou. What dreams!

We did not go to the isolated church of St. Just, a quarter of a mile across the fields to the left, but should have, and will another time, for every one of its stones is eloquent, and its Roman gate and door, the one set as the frame for the picture of the other, form a perspective which alone would reward a longer walk. But St-Bertrand was calling, and around the first turn beyond the houses of Volcabrère, there it stood beckoning, at the end of the straight white road, which pointed like a long finger directly at the rock, the town and the gray Gothic buttresses of the cathedral. The zigzag ramps up the rock were a little hard to pull in the heat, but at every turn there were compensations that mounted in beauty like the successive sweeps of a symphony.

Pausing at the highest turn a remarkable fact faced us. All the green and golden fields of this valley had once been a vast Roman city. It was begun by Pompey, about seventy years before our era, and was known as Lugdunum Convenarum. As a "city" of the Roman Empire it became one of the most important cities of all Gaul and the metropolis of all the Pyrenees. It is reported to have contained five hundred thousand inhabitants, and a proverb says that a cat made the trip from Lugdunum to Volcabrère entirely over a road of roofs! In the fratricidal wars of the Frankish kings of the sixth century Lugdunum was sacked, burned and utterly destroyed. The life of not one inhabitant was spared. Not a stone was left upon a stone. There remained only

a naked rock amid nude fields, a solitude and silence. And this silence lasted for five centuries.

In the middle of the eleventh century a young nobleman, Bertrand, Bishop of Comminges, chose this retreat for his episcopal seat. He became famous for his preaching and for his piety, and as a civil administrator as well, for the lords of Comminges seem to have yielded to this ecclesiastic in all things. As his cathedral rose above the rock, with chapter-house and cloister, little houses sprung up about it in a village which ever after his death bore his name.

Legend attributes various wonders to his power. In his day the scourge of the valleys of Comminges, was a dreaded Spanish chieftain, Sancius Parra de Olcia, who with fire and blood left a trail of terror from the peaks to the plains. Yet before Bertrand he gave up his prisoners and their flocks and retreated and never returned. With a branch of a tree Bertrand is said to have conquered the crocodile which has since hung in his cathedral. Finally, and not least of the marvels attributed to the bishop, was the miracle of the cold water. A certain woman brought him her babe and complained that his father would not support them. The man involved stoutly denied all complicity. Whereupon Bishop Bertrand ordered a large vessel of cold water be placed before them. In it he deposited a rock. Then, said he to the accused, "In the name of Our Lord, take that stone out of the water. If you are lying He will give a sign."

The man lifted the stone out of the water but his hands were scalded as if by boiling water. Whereupon, it is said, he admitted his guilt and made the proper amends. When Bertrand felt the approach of death, he caused himself to be carried into his cathedral and he expired there at the foot of the altar.

Among his distinguished successors, one left the shadow of these mountains for the white light of the papal throne at Rome. The Revolution suppressed the bishopric. Its jurisdiction to-day is limited to the spiritual needs of the village. But the well preserved cathedral, with its unique treasures and memorable past, ranks well to the fore among historic monuments of France.

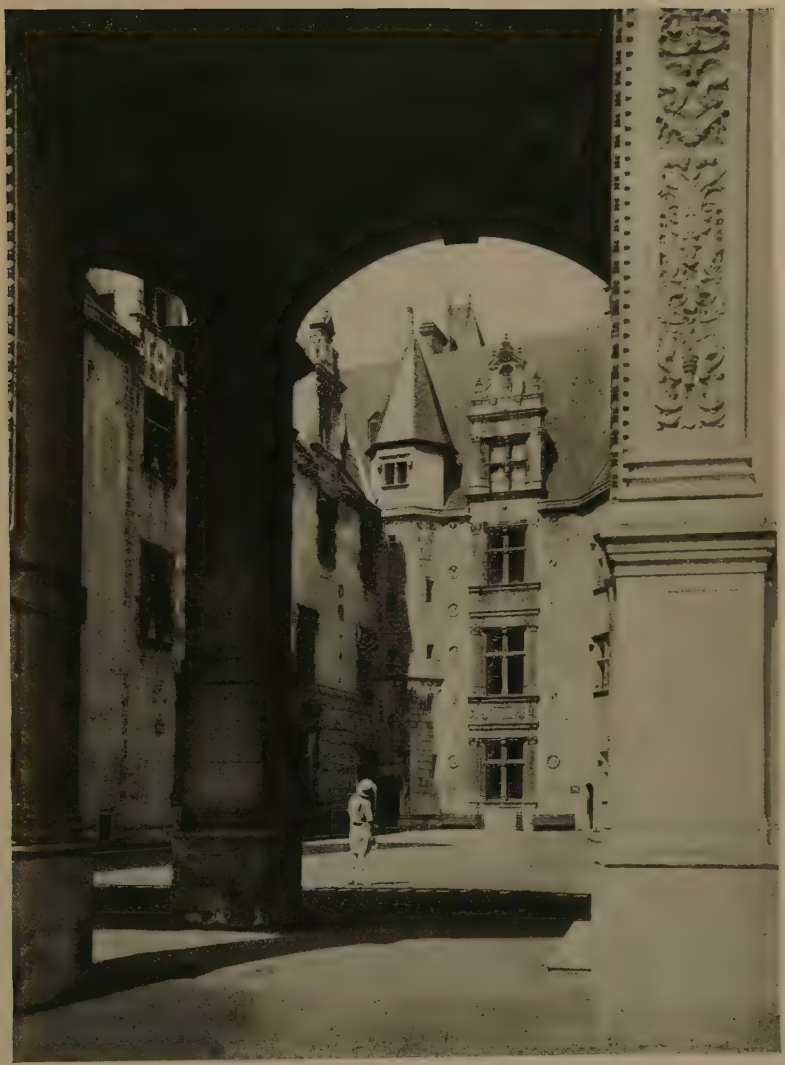
While we were looking over the fields, where once was the reported elevated pathway of the tile-trotting cat, off toward St. Just, the bells of that little church set up a pressing call to mass. Other belfries in various directions took up the call revealing an unexpected number of churches and chapels in this mountain cup. The carillon in the tower of the cathedral joined in, and so we passed through the village gateway, up the winding street between the medieval houses, and into the church, pleased to have arrived in time for a service. Apparently the bell had sounded a mere preliminary call, for the church was empty, except for some preparatory activity of a pair of acolytes at the altar. The interval offered a precious opportunity to look about.

It is a large basilica diminished considerably in size

by one of the most beautiful choir-screens and rood-lofts in the world, a high enclosure forming a miniature dark carved wood nave within the gray stone nave of the cathedral. The ample apse is similarly diminished in effect by the inset sanctuary. From the center of the choir the effect is at once spacious and intimate; vast and lofty under the Gothic vaulting, but every detail of the carving near and clear. Inside the screen, and a part of the general masterpiece of design and carving, there are sixty-six stalls and two episcopal thrones, one for use when the bishop pontificated and the other when he was informally in attendance on divine service. It is conceived in the Renaissance style and so reveals a formal and harmonious general design in which the carved details of frieze, panels, spaces, rests and brackets never once repeat themselves, offering an endless variety of Biblical personages, saints, pontiffs, mythological characters, animals and grotesques. The sacred and profane do not associate, however. The pagan figures are all on one side and the religious figures face them across the width of the choir. A single feature of the almost equally ornate outer surface of this choir-screen is a frieze, along the entire length of its three sides, of life-sized sculptured heads of the men and women of the court of Francis I. A pleasing effect of harmony is attained by the repetition of this Renaissance design in the carvings of the grille about the sanctuary and again in the sculpture of the main altar.

In the ambulatory are eleven chapels, but they are scarcely to be remarked in the presence of the huge mausoleum of St. Bertrand, paneled with scenes from his life painted on wood, much less in the presence of the superb tomb of Bishop Hugues de Châtillon, which was chiseled out of Carrara marble about 1450, a rare example of the combination of richness and simplicity, opulent detail and classic serenity. In a corner near the central door is an imposing Renaissance organ case. Its great beauty is not here properly displayed. Its position in the corner, cut off by the choir-stalls, not only detracts from its own effect but it disturbs the otherwise symmetrical interior. But what a masterly agglomeration it is.

We were a little oppressed by the age and decay which mantled all this beauty, when the old cathedral came quietly to life. Tapers began to twinkle on the altar. The bell, high up, remote and hidden, but clear, announced the beginning of mass. Some twenty schoolboys in black shirts and blue cinctures were marshaled into the sanctuary. To the creaking and banging of the heavy studded front door a few farm women, a few nuns, a few little girls and an old man or two scattered themselves into the handsome ancient priceless stalls which, in ages remote, were the privileged places of the canons who came by day and by night to chant the sacred office. Five other men climbed into the rood-loft. A soft fluent harmony stole from the organ. A crucifer, a thurifer and two candle-bearers led the procession into the sanctuary.



The courtyard of the Château at Pau

The Pic de Ger near Eaux-Bonnes

The sight was unbelievable at first. Behind the cross walked a company of eighteen diminutive monks, habited entirely in white, their cowls drawn over their heads, their hands folded in their sleeves, but their voices, soft and clear, chanting the processional like a choir of angels. As they passed in the sanctuary gate they dropped their cowls and, instead of the seamed faces and tonsured pates of monks, were revealed the fresh young heads of the choir-boys.

After a responsive chant between the priest, with the thinnest voice surely that ever came out of adult, and a bearded giant in the rood-loft with surely the loudest, the procession left the altar and proceeded to the greater ambulatory between the stone walls and the wooden walls and grille of choir and chancel. In this procession the whole congregation of some thirty joined, including ourselves. Just when the circuit should have been completed, and the procession should have returned into the center of the cathedral, the singing ahead grew gradually fainter and then melted into the distance, finally inaudible. The effect, unexplained, was not a little mysterious. At a turning we saw it was because the procession was disappearing through the side wall. As we reached that point we followed and came out upon what seemed, under these circumstances, one of the loveliest spots I had ever seen. It was the old cloister which St. Bertrand had put here nearly eight centuries ago.

The crucifer led the way, the circuit of the sunny col-

onnaded quadrangle, under the shadowy vaultings, past crumbling sculptures, old tombs, and enigmatic inscriptions, while the chant and the incense ascended toward heaven. When he halted he left us, by accident, though he could not have improved by design, on the side opposite the door from the church, on the side where the arches are open outward, and, from this eyrie, panel the vast panorama of green valley depths, gray peaks and azure sky. It was so unexpected, so unimagined, such a matchless effect, in circumstances which put a benediction on the beauty of it all, that as an experience it stands quite apart, satisfying and complete.

The stop at Tarbes was lost motion. In spite of its monuments this town had nothing to offer which might not be seen elsewhere in these parts in more important expression. It was more interesting when the Black Prince came to visit its seigneur, and his Princess made her celebrated effort to induce the canny Gaston Phœbus of Foix to remit their friends' indemnity. Froissart makes much of that incident, but there is scarcely a recollection of it in busy Tarbes to-day.

There was a time, not so many years ago, when Lourdes just beyond was sought chiefly, perhaps solely, for its château, the remnant of an extensive feudal establishment. To-day the château is practically neglected, submerged by a more vivid interest which will have a place of its own beyond.

Perhaps, when we settled again in a train, I should

have had an eye for the passing panorama, but I was too well entertained by our fellow travelers. On one side were two priests who sat well forward until their knees met and supported a newspaper which was their table for a game of cards. The game was strange to me, and it seemed to have more scoring than playing, and more laughing and perspiring than scoring. The good spirits of the ecclesiastics were delightful. Each roared over any advantage he had over the other, quite unmindful of discomfort, and so contagiously that every one in the compartment joined in the laughter. That is every one but one.

He was another Frenchman, who sat on the other side, with a pompadour of gray spikes and a mustache of bristles. His manner in reading his paper was just as intensive, with the challenge of a porcupine, defying the columns to deliver anything as important as it ought to be. When he put down his paper, he put it down with a bang, snapped down the lids of his eyes, and went straight to sleep. His rigid expression remained set even then, and his perpendicular pompadour stood guard over a very citadel of a forehead. His hair cut square, his square-cut chin, and his flat ears, made his whole head look as if it were painted on a block of stone, and when he woke up his head seemed a bust of granite come to life.

But the most surprising thing about this fierce person was revealed as we descended from the train at Pau. He marshaled his bags like a general and stood at atten-

tion till the train stopped and a porter cleared his way. Then he stepped down on the platform and instead of attacking the world single-handed, as it appeared he might, he surrendered to the arms of a lovely pink and white wife and two charming daughters, giving each of them a double-barreled French kiss, that is to say one on each cheek. His hat hid the bristles, but nothing, not even a false modesty, concealed the softened lines about his mouth or the tears that trailed across his cheeks. Evidently that dog was all bark and no bite.

CHAPTER XI

Pau

PAU—ENGLISH OCCUPATION—CITY OF HENRI IV—THE CHÂTEAU—THE LOVE AND LORE OF HENRY OF NAVARRE—OUTWITTING THE GRANDE MONARQUE—THE PANORAMA OF THE PYRENEES—COMEDIES AT THE CONCERTS—CUPID AND A CAMERA—VILLAGES ROUNDABOUT—A PATTERN FOR PYRENEAN TOWNS—ADVENTURE OF THE MISSING WORD—ANSWERING A KING—THE MARBLE OF THESE MOUNTAINS—THE FLYING FRENCHMAN—THE INDECISION OF AN ECCLESIASTIC—THE VALLEY OF THE GAVE D'ASPE—THE SCENE OF THE TELLING OF THE HEPTAMERON.

Pau's fame rests on a tripod, one support of which is the visitors in search of a mild winter; another is the memory of Henry of Navarre, whose goodness and greatness are here merged in a kind of localized national myth; and the third is its own matchless situation in relation to the Pyrenees.

Otherwise, it is a neat little city without much to distinguish it. It is not so large as Perpignan but appears larger, it is not so interesting as that city though it is more beautiful, and it has not the definite personality of the Catalan capital of Roussillon but it has the marked assurance and liveliness of a more worldly metropolis. One sometimes hears it spoken of as "The little Paris of the South." The truth of that observation rests largely on the fact that it is little and it is in the south.

Meaning to inquire what was most interesting in Pau I carelessly asked "What is Pau's chief interest?" and a bright little Frenchwoman seized my slip to answer: "The English." We had not been there over long when this was confirmed many times. An Englishwoman who admitted it, included the Spaniards and Americans among the winter visitors who "have nearly pushed the French inhabitants from their stools," and added that those natives who remain "are rather looked upon as visitors among the intruders who, like cuckoos, have turned the original birds out of their nests."

The English passed this way with the Black Prince in the fourteenth century. They passed, and did not return until Wellington led them here again when he did his bit to weaken the Napoleonic power by freeing Spain of the French. From these early years of the nineteenth century dates the real discovery of Pau by the English. Its mild climate, its windless quiet and its saturating sunshine have made it a formidable rival of the Riviera for English affections ever since. They have really shaped out-of-door life here on English models, and have made the little French city a center for cricket, golf, tennis, riding and fox-hunting. These are the winter sports of Pau, with the high snowfields of the range in sight and in easy reach for a day's skating or skiing or sledding.

Whatever Pau may be to the English it is to the French the city of their adored Henri IV. Here still

waves the white plume of the knight of Navarre. Or, perhaps, it should be said that they still wave it. Of Charlemagne, Joan of Arc, Henri IV and Napoleon it is becoming that the most human friendly figure of the group should be worshiped in this mild and friendly country where nature itself, like their hero, is rugged and firm and awe-inspiring, as well as mild and beneficent and winsome. One is drawn near to Henri IV at Pau just as one feels the presence of Dante in Florence and of Washington at Mount Vernon.

The château, which rises with such distinction at the west end of the higher town, is the repository of the local lore of this popular prince. They show the château with reverence due a sanctuary. It is true they pass lightly over its Roman ancestry, though it is believed that deep down in the foundations are fragments of stone put there when Gaul was a Roman province, for Pau was known as the Castrum Palli. They admit, as a detail that it were just as well not completely to ignore, that Gaston Phœbus de Foix began the present castle and has left the impress of his stern feudal period in the massive square donjon.

But when they thus briefly bridge the intervals between the beginnings of Pau and the sixteenth century, and reach the versatile Marguerite de Valois, "*la Marguerite des Marguerites,*" sister of Francis I; her virile daughter, Jeanne d'Albret; and that princess' royal son, the beloved Béarnais, the great Henry of Navarre; their

passionate pride in this prince seems to eclipse all else, even, temporarily, their contemporary republicanism. Though citizens of the republic they are still worshipful subjects of Henri IV. This fidelity to political present, as well as to contrariwise historic past, repeats the dilemma of the Catalan of Pyrénées Orientales and of the equally racially conscious Basques of Basses-Pyrénées. For all their sentimentalism over their ancestry and over other epochs, they leave no doubt of their firm adhesion to the living republic. The sons of the Pyrenees all along the range, testified that on the bloody altars of the north where they followed the leadership of the two latest immortals of the Pyrenean provinces: Marshal "Papa" Joffre of Rivesaltes in Pyrénées-Orientales and Marshal Foch of Tarbes in Hautes-Pyrénées.

The château is a not unpleasing *mélange* of many styles of architecture. But it is scarcely representative of any one. Many epochs have left their impress. The latest restorations removed the traces of the Napoleonic desecration. In passing this way in 1808 he used it for a cavalry barracks, "as if," some one added not less wisely than naively, "as if it were a church."

To enter the château one crosses a short bridge, passes under a portal pierced by three arches, and crosses the court of honor, an irregular quadrangle. Inside as well as out, this building reveals itself as simply one of the fine, if not among the finest, princely residences of France. One passes from one great room to an-

other, conscious of their correctness and their dignity, of some exquisite furnishings and of notable tapestries which here gain in being seen in the wall spaces for which they were woven. But one is moved little except by the recital of what passed here.

It was this section of France which was most receptive to the ideas of the Reformation. And it found here in Pau most valuable sympathizers in Marguerite de Valois and her daughter Jeanne. When Calvin fled his persecutors, he found protection in the château of Pau, as the guest of Marguerite. It was with a shudder that we found ourselves ushered, without anticipating its history, into a noble salon on the first floor of the south wing, and were abruptly told that Jeanne d'Albret in an excess of zeal for the Protestant cause so far forgot her promise of immunity to six Catholic lords of Béarn as to permit her general, Montgomery, to murder them all in this room on the spot under our feet. The attendant recited the incident with effect. When he saw he had produced the result he desired, he added in extenuation, as if not wishing utterly to crush the chief heroine of the house: "But, for example, is not bloody history so universal as to be commonplace? It is difficult to find a beloved figure who unites a strong mind, a firm will and a kind heart." He seemed satisfied with his retriever, and we moved on.

It is with a more agreeable sensation, after mounting another floor, one is led into the apartment where Jeanne

d'Albret gave birth to great Henri, and to be shown the identical natal bed, a piece of royal magnificence, and, in still another room, the young prince's cradle made of a monster tortoise's shell. This curiosity, and its legend, was offered our attention with averted eyes. They need not have been. Both enriched the visit apart from the credibility of the story. It is certainly a unique and ingenious cradle, such as the parents of prehistoric and mythological babies must have found simple and practical, and the legend accords with other oft repeated and amusing details of the little prince's birth. No one knows quite when or how it started, and no one thinks of contradicting it. So, like much of the pious miraculous lore of the Pyrenees, it survives less because it is believed than because no one wished to destroy a pretty detail which may have more foundation than the literal-minded are willing to grant it.

Indeed, it seems as if they can not mention their great Henri here in Pau, at least to a stranger, without repeating the quaint circumstances of his birth. Jeanne had not been fortunate with her other children. Hence the heroic efforts to give strength to this one. Jeanne's father bade her sing when her babe arrived, and she chanted a hymn to "*Notre Dame du bout du pont,*" in the Béarnais patois, begging for a son and joining the very mountaintops in her supplication for divine aid. Since then all Béarn women, when lying in, chant this hymn, and at the end of many a bridge in this principality one

finds a shrine to "*Noustre Dame deou cap deou poun,*" where expectant women pray for a safe delivery.

When Jeanne's babe arrived to the music of this pious song, and was found to be a boy, the grandfather took him in his arms and showed him to the crowd outside the château, exclaiming: "Behold! My ewe has given birth to a lion!" They say that Henri owed his robust temperament to his first nourishment, which was not from his mother's breast. Some say it was a bit of garlic, but it is easier to believe those who say it was a few drops of the excellent Jurançon wine squeezed from the grapes grown on the Pyrenean foot-hills in sight of the château. His youth was not spent in the château. He was sent to be nursed in a cottage in the adjacent village of Billère. Later he was sent up the valley of the Gave* de Pau, to the mountain château of a relative above Coarraze.

Next to the day of his birth, the Béarnais treasure the tradition of the days when their Henri first appeared in armor. It must have been an occasion worth remembering. The Queen of Navarre invited all her allied governors to the palace at Pau. There were great fêtes for three days. On the first of these, in the presence of the court and people, the young prince was, with great ceremony, presented with a suit of armor, a sword, a shield and a helmet. Thus armed, and mounted, he joined in the cavalcades and tournaments held in the valley of the

*Localism for *torrent* in western French Pyrenees.

gave below the city. The festivities culminated on the evening of the third day. Then the prince put aside all royal show, and appeared in the dress of the neighboring mountaineers, with only a gold fleur-de-lis pinned on his velvet *beret*. Surrounded by his countrymen, he took his sword and plunged it into a great container of wine, then raised it, partly in salute and partly in benediction above the people, the army and the court, to signify his devotion to the three estates. The enthusiasm for Henri IV awakened by this dedication seems undiminished, in spite of the brief Revolutionary eclipse, and survives strong to-day as ever in the hearts of the people of Pau and the adjacent Pyrenees.

I hunted for a certain statue of Louis XIV which that monarch imposed on Pau, but it probably vanished when they swept out many other pomps of royalty. The people had asked King Louis for a statue of their Henri. The Grande Monarque refused their request and sent a statue of himself and commanded it be raised instead. The citizens, not less obedient to their sovereign than loyal to their hero, raised the statue of Louis and chiseled on the base, in Béarnais patois, "To him who is the Grandson of Our Great Henry." Unable to learn even where this morsel of delicious impudence had stood, I invented an ironic denouement, and imagined it had been in the center of the Place Royale where now stands the marble effigy of the beloved grandfather, Henri IV himself.

Another king was born in Pau of whom one hears little. He was a son of the family of Deu Pouey, which changed that name to Bernadotte (from their native Béarn?), and he reigned over Norway and Sweden as Charles XIV. The people, at least the Protestant people, of Pau no doubt think oftenest of Bernadotte in moments of chagrin that their Henri should have forsaken Protestantism to wear the crown of France, for then they can solace themselves with Bernadotte's abjurement of Catholicism in order that he might sit on the throne of the Scandinavian peninsula.

However diverting these historic details may seem to the newcomer to Pau, they subordinate themselves, if not at first then eventually, to the permanent and incomparable distinction given the city by its situation in relation to the Pyrenees. That situation expresses itself gloriously in its Promenade des Pyrénées and the spectacle of the mountains there revealed.

Art has made of the Promenade a beautiful platform from which to view the spectacle. It is a paved boulevard over fifty feet wide and a full mile long, on the southern edge of the plateau on which the principal part of Pau is built. At the west end rises the château in its park, at the east end it terminates in the Public Gardens. Between castle and gardens is an uninterrupted line of private villas, and lovely gardens, and hotels which rival those on the Rue de Rivoli. The south side of the Promenade is guarded throughout its length by a balustrade.

Across this balustrade one looks down on the lower town; on the meanderings of the Gave de Pau; beyond it to rambling hills, green with grain and forests, and dotted with gleaming villas; behind the first hills rise others fold on fold; and behind them all a great jagged gray and purple and white wall of mountains, over sixty miles long, high against the azure of the horizon.

Lamartine said that the most beautiful sea view in the world is at Naples and the most beautiful landscape at Pau. Other writers have at greater length exhausted themselves, and sometimes perhaps their readers, in describing this remarkable picture. To one the peaks appear a drove of giant cattle each endeavoring to raise its back higher than the other. To another they present themselves as a bank of clouds, bathed by the air into aerial forms, dim contours, vapory phantoms. It is not a sudden overwhelming sensation they give. There is nothing of awe or oppression, only a serene and supreme pleasure. And one returns again and again, without disappointment, to find renewed delight in ever changing lines and tints and lights.

In the east, where the range seems to melt into the misty horizon, are the mountains about the Bagnères-de-Bigorre. One even makes out the Pic d'Arneille over fifty miles away, although it is one of the lesser altitudes. To the west the Pic d'Anie at thirty-two miles makes the last heroic stand for the Pyrenean giants before haze and the horizon envelop the range, beyond

which it gradually descends into the Atlantic at Biarritz.

All along the line between, the eye picks out crests of over ten thousand feet at a distance of from forty to over fifty miles. The most conspicuous are not always the highest. Lofty Mont Balaïtous barely appears above the long line of the Crête de Coos. The Vignemale, rising ten thousand, eight hundred and twenty feet above sea level, highest of all the Pyrenees in France, is picked out miles beyond the more definite and apparently much higher Ségalas, just a point east of due south, marking the high point of the mountains enclosing Cauterets. Farther east is the Pic de Troumouse, a sign-post proclaiming the location of the Cirque de Gavarnie. Next beyond are Long, Campbieil and Neouvielle, all farther and all higher, top-sergeants in the serried phalanx.

After the western sentinel of Anie and the lofty Vignemale, the eye is wooed and held longest by the distinct cone of the Pic du Midi de Bigorre to the southeast, and then to the southwest, where the front ranks open, by the majestic display of the sharp jagged twin Pics du Midi d'Ossau. Before us lay nearly the whole of that wonderland which we were preparing to visit on leaving Pau. The view lacked only the eastward crests about Luchon to include nearly all the highest and best known peaks of the Pyrenees, and all that stretch of gorges and valleys in which are tucked the best known and most frequented spas of these mountains.

The ease and quiet of Pau somehow fastened on us, however, and held us even after this first introduction had been made to those features which travelers come so far to see. There were pleasant evenings with the orchestra which plays in the kiosk where the Place Royale meets the Promenade, and where, if the queen of the night vouchsafes to make her royal progress unclouded, the whole panorama of mountains takes on new forms and aspects, low clouds playing among their summits, vague wraiths appearing and dissolving and disappearing in the black and silver mystery of the southern moonlight. By day the calendar was quickened by many explorations, swift little motor dashes counted in hours, or walking trips whose leisureliness brought the people and the countryside and the details of picturesque places into intimate acquaintance.

When the band played and the crowds came, there were often enacted little incidents which sometimes eclipsed both music and moonlight. The crowd itself was a study in canniness. Good King Henry turns his marble back upon the musicians, probably not in criticism, for the tunes are fair enough and free, but more likely on his thrifty fellow-citizens, whose city furnishes them excellent chairs for twenty-five and fifty centimes, though scarcely any of them seemed willing to pay it. Instead they stood behind the circumference of chairs, as near as standing was permitted, and when the music in the kiosk stopped they broke the quiet with a kind of music

of their own as they scrunched the loose gravel of the square in intervals of massed leisurely promenading.

Most interesting were the little comedies improvised unconsciously by the collector of the fees for the chairs and the unwilling contributors who tried to steal into them. Of course, as a general rule, those few who occupied chairs went to them directly and paid punctually. But, once in a while, one saw a sly would-be purloiner who dared to match shrewdness with the dame who collected the toll. It was useless. She might be occupied yards away, with her back turned, but she came about and spotted the intruder with an instinct true as a magnetic needle, and all indignant protests to her were futile as a martial roll on a toy drum.

And how bland and suave and ingratiating she was with her programs of the concert. These rareties, on the cheapest of paper and the list of selections obscured in presumably profitable advertising, seemed a creation for the special graft of the amiable chair-lady. Every available program was confided to her for distribution. There was a fiction that they were free. But when you asked for one the hand that extended it never withdrew empty. There she stood above you with benign silence which seemed to shriek to the multitude that cheated she would not be, try it if this villain dare. You whisperingly inquired "How much?" She proclaimed aloud "What you will," whereupon she had you at a further disadvantage. You didn't dare publicly pay what you

willed, for by preference and justice that would have been nothing at all. She had placed you on your honor. If you would appear mean and niggardly to the world, which in this instance is one shrewd grafting woman and every one in the radius of her voice, well, your character was in your own hands. The franc was presently in hers. She never lost.

At a popular open air café in the Rue Gachet we were treated to a comic episode of a father, his two daughters, an innocent young man at the adjacent table, and an itinerant photographer. The artist set up his photographic machine before the young ladies and their father, focused, exposed, developed the prints and negotiated their sale to the delighted papa. Then came the family discovery of a fourth face in the group, that of the young man at the next table. It was too remarkable a circumstance to keep to themselves. Urged it seemed by the young ladies, the father presented the young man with a copy of the picture. He accepted with profuse thanks and bowed himself into an acquaintance with the young ladies. After a few polite preliminaries he inquired names and doubtless addresses, for a fountain pen noted some such information, and he retired with a well established *entente cordiale*. It was not difficult to dramatize a sequel. They parted, mutual study of the photograph which so strangely drew them all together and of the addresses, an exchange of notes, and eventually the at first resented but insistent street pho-

tographer is developed into an unconscious matrimonial agent. He was no mean pattern for the part, for he was fat and cherubic, smiling and insinuating, and would have given a first-class middle-aged account of himself in pink tights and a flaxen wig, with a blue sash, wings and a bow and arrow.

The walks and drives about Pau lead among the richest vineyards and fields and pastures and orchards of France. There are amusing little towns in all directions, some right down in the valley of the Gave de Pau, others tucked away in the folds of the hills, sometimes swung in hammocks of rolling green swards, sometimes perched on rocks as if carved Rodin-wise out of the rough unchiseled base which supports them. Nearest are Coarraze, Lescar and Morlaás, all historic pendants of the parent city which is always in sight.

It was at Coarraze that Henri IV was brought up like a peasant, though at the same time his governess, Susanne de Bourbon, Baronne de Missoens, taught the not unwilling young prince the lore of the gentle art *"de conter Fleurette."* Lescar is the ancient Beneharnum from which derives the name Béarn. The cathedral bears over its door the inscription *"Phœbus me refecit, anno 1635."* It is called after St. Denis, and like its namesake north of Paris, it was the chosen burial place of royalty. It was once the sepulcher of the early kings and queens of Navarre and the princes and princesses of Béarn. Here rested Catherine de Navarre, Marguerite de Valois and

Jeanne d'Albret. The tombs have succumbed to political jealousies and passions, and to-day the earliest of them date only from the beginning of the seventeenth century. Morlaás is the ghost of a city once important. That was when it was the capital of Béarn. One goes there now only to see the Roman-Byzantine portal and the quaint belfry of the church of Saint Foy. They are among the most beautiful architectural details in all the Midi.

Listening to guides and curés and sacristans retailing the traditions of these and other places I was struck with the similarity of the history of the towns along the Pyrenees. Little differs but names and dates. They nearly all fit into some such a skeleton as follows, with varying names and dates filled in from any encyclopedia:

".....was known to the Romans as .....um .....um. The Saracens seized it in ..... and evidence of their tenure may be found in the ruined ..... just beyond the ..... During the Middle Ages it was the capital of the province of ..... The château, built in ..... by ....., was destroyed by ..... (Montgomery, Simon de Montfort, Louis XIII or The Revolution), and only a portion of the ..... remains. The walls were razed to make room for modern streets. It was formerly the seat of a bishop, who also exercised civil jurisdiction, taken from him during The Revolution. To-day ..... is merely the market town of the canton. The church of St. ..... has a beautiful portal and is the shrine of ..... vis-

Cauterets in its mountain cup

The Pic du Midi

ited by a pilgrimage on August (or September) .....
The Baths of ..... are much sought in cases of
....., ..., ..., ..., ...
....., ..., ..., ..., ...
...., ..., ...,
...., ..., ...,
....., ..., ...,” etc., etc.

We nearly missed the visit to Lescar, and perhaps much else, by ignorance of a word with which all travelers should equip themselves whenever they go into a country with a language foreign to them. Lescar is less than five miles out, a little far to walk on a hot summer day, and so near that a motor would annihilate the distance. So we made up a party, and sought two old-fashioned, one-horse victorias, and divided our group between them. Before leaving the city our victoria stopped at a shop for us to make a purchase. When we came out the driver had disappeared but his venerable servant in the traces stood as left, untethered and apparently sound asleep. There seemed to be only one rational thing to do, to step into the victoria, sit down and wait the return of the driver. We suited the action to the idea, but we had not counted on the habitude of the horse. Something about the familiar noise and motion behind him signified to him that the vehicle was once more occupied and he automatically moved off. We called “Whoa!” gently at first, and then desperately, at the

same time reaching for the of course unreachable reins, as he began to pick up speed under what he took for our noisy urging. Naturally the horse did not understand English. He had never studied it, he had never been taught it, he had never traveled abroad. And then my companion and I suddenly realized that our ignorance was just as great as the horse's, for neither of us knew how to tell a horse to stop in French. It was no time at all until our panicky English beseechments had the amiable nag in full trot down the narrow crowded street. It was just when the situation seemed most ludicrous and most dangerous that the driver, who had been running after, caught up, made quite an acrobatic vault into his seat, and the situation simmered into a hearty laugh, and a resolution, for security's sake, always to start acquaintance with a foreign language with the equivalent of the word "Whoa."

Among the longer trips that interested most was that up the Gave d'Aspe. It leads to Oloron and thence directly south to the near-by Spanish summits. The whole distance from Pau to the pass is about fifty-five miles as the road winds, and so the round trip is better divided into several days. It seemed as if nothing could surpass the pleasantness of the first hills and valleys, so green and warm, so fragrant and abundant. They seemed never to disappoint, they never bored with repetition though the chronicler may, and they seemed unselfishly always to be offering the way up the heights to greater

delights, or down their laughing streams, in returning, to all the wide world beyond. They so engaged us that we missed a right turn to Oloron and were in Bielle before we knew it.

That was not a bad mistake to make for it led to acquaintance with a quaint tradition of an amusing passage between the people of the parish and the king of France. It was in the days of their own Henri IV gone from Béarn to the throne at Paris. He knew his home neighborhood well, however, and he had admired the four marble columns which surmounted the main altar of the little church of St. Vivien. From the capital he wrote to the people of Bielle asking them to send him their columns to adorn his chapel of the Louvre. Their patois answer is said to have been, in translation: "Sire, you are the master of our hearts and our fortunes; but with regard to the columns of the temple, they belong to God. Demand them of Him."

These columns, like most other marble in the buildings along the Pyrenees, are cut from the quarries for which these mountains are famous. A few miles above Bielle are the quarries of Louvie-Soubiron from which were carved statues now in the Place de la Concorde and in the Madeleine. There are other notable quarries on the Ourse near St-Bertrand-de-Comminges, and near Aspet in the valley of the Ger south of St-Gaudens. From the *Trau del Desmembreri* (Hole of Oblivion), much nearer the summit in the wild valley of the Lez, south of St-

Girons, were taken the black marbles with the white veins in the altars about the tomb of Napoleon in the Invalides. In the lower hills near Castelnau-Durban is found a valued red marble. But the most famous of all the Pyrenean quarries are those of St-Béat at the mouth of the Vall d'Aran. We were told that their pure white marble was known longer than any of the others and that they have supplied statuary marble for most of the famous palaces and cathedrals of France. From the marble of St-Béat the Romans chiseled the column of Trajan, still standing in Rome, and, after ages of neglect, these quarries were rediscovered to furnish the basins of the fountains of Versailles.

This same church of Bielle was interesting on another count, as any one who visits it may find, and which recalled the wall-closet of the six keys in the capitol of Andorra. Bielle, though now a village of only a few hundred souls, was once the capital of the former republic of Ossau. The strong-box of the republic is shown in a room off the church and it is especially interesting because it has three key-holes and its contents were, and still are, safeguarded by three keys, which are kept in the possession of the mayors of Laruns, St-Colome and Bielle.

In the valley between Bielle and Oloron they are more interested, however, in hunting than in keys and quarrying. They have even a tradition of a rival of the Flying Dutchman, a clerical Flying Frenchman, a victim

of his weakness for the chase. This priest, according to the tradition thereabout, was one day vesting himself, and about to ascend the altar to say mass, when he heard that a wild animal had appeared near by. Without waiting to remove his vestments he rushed out of the church, called his dogs, mounted his horse and was off. The penance meted to him for this sacrilege is that he has never been allowed to stop. The peasants pretend that they have seen him riding through the mountains at twilight, or they are at least very sure they have heard the yelp of his pack.

On our way through Oloron, we stopped before crossing the river, to visit the church of Sainte-Marie, former cathedral of the diocese of Oloron, and wondered if it was here actually that Gérard Roussel, the Dominican, pursued his quaint career. He was a distinguished scholar of the Reformation period, had met and known Luther, and had been a professor of philosophy at the University of Paris. When he returned to his mountains he found favor with Marguerite de Valois, and she had him named Bishop of Oloron. But the poor man seemed unable to choose between Rome and Luther. Tradition says he professed the religion of both, and preached in the morning for Rome and at night for Luther, which gave satisfaction to no one. Finally a hatchet found its way into his skull, which seems to have satisfied every one.

Whatever may have been the bishop's doubts we were

quite sure of the prettiness of three little girls who acted a quaintly pious scene in his church, while we pretended to examine the otherwise uninteresting interior. It is a well-known Catholic custom for women not to enter a church with their heads uncovered. In these warm southern valleys the women are generally bareheaded and so, in entering a church for a devotional moment, they spread their handkerchiefs over their heads, or perhaps the mantillas which they sometimes carry. These three tots, however, had no handkerchiefs, but had somewhere acquired a lace scarf. They paused at the great door and made of the single scarf a canopy for all three. Of course they had to hold their little heads very close together, and to advance to Our Lady's altar with much care, not to get uncovered. They managed the feat with seriousness and success and, as they presented themselves before the shrine, we could not help feeling they must have proved a welcome bouquet at the altar of their patroness. Their retreat was made with more speed, and less caution, and they were sacrilegiously uncovered as they disappeared out of the door, which seemed not to affect their dispositions for they sent back into the quiet church a very merry peal of laughter as they scampered down street.

This church's chief surviving claim to attention is the main door with its exquisite tympanum. Here I should have been glad to see carved the words which distinguish a less interesting doorway at Tarbes: "May this

building remain until the ant has drunk up the waters of ocean and the tortoise has made the circuit of the globe." A proper enough wish for so many of the monuments scattered along these mountains.

The whole valley of the Aspe appeals with its varied picturesqueness. Of the mountains, however, only the Pic d'Anie and the Pic du Midi d'Ossau have striking heights. It terminates at the Somport, where the road drops into Spain, on its way to Jaca, a quaint fortified town about the size of Puigcerda and Seo de Urgel, but united by mountain railway with the main line which trails away eastward to Saragossa and reaches the sea at Barcelona. Under the pass of Somport is the third of the tunnels which are waiting for the connecting rails to climb the adjacent gorges and bring trans-Pyrenean train travel nearer the center than the absolute water-side extremities by the two seas as at present.

Our chief interest in this valley focused less on these things than in a certain association which has immortalized the banks of the Gave d'Aspe. Indeed we found a green glade by the tossing water just beyond Sarrance and there settled to the enjoyment of a picnic lunch, and to the conviction that it was the identical shady spot where Dame Oisille and her companions spun the stories which Marguerite de Valois, or de Navarre or d'Angoulême, as she is variously known, retold in The Heptameron.

The alleged adventure which produced this book be-

gan at the long popular spa of Cauterets, which we were soon to visit. There were gathered there the usual fashionable summer crowd when, one September in the middle of the sixteenth century, there came down the mountain gorges such a flood that even these seekers for baths found rather too much water. The cottages were so filled with water that no one could remain in them, Cauterets was suddenly deserted, and the invalids and idlers scattered in all directions. A party of French men and women started down the valley for Tarbes, but when they reached the swollen Gave de Pau they found the bridges swept away and their passage blocked. Some returned up the valley, crossed the range, descended into Spain, and reached Barcelona where they took ship for Marseilles and other ports and so reached home. But a few turned west and sought shelter in the Abbey of St. Savin only a few miles away. Here they heard that their friends the Widow Oisille and the Knight Simontault had made their way across the mountains farther west, and had reached the Abbey of Notre Dame de Sarrance on the Gave d'Aspe. The others determined to follow, in spite of the wretched state of the roads, but in setting out they lacked for nothing, for the Abbot "had given them of the best horses that were in Lavedan, and goodly cloaks of Béarn, and abundant provaunt, and an escort to guide them. And so, faring more on foot than on horseback, with great sweat and travail, they came to Our Lady of Sarrance." Here they found an inhospit-

able abbot, but he "durst not refuse them lodging, for the fear that he had of the Lord of Béarn, by whom he knew them to be beloved"; so "he being a well taught hypocrite, put on for them his most obliging face; and led them to see the good lady Oisille and the gentle knight Simontault."

Here on the Aspe, however, they again found themselves prisoners of the swollen torrent, and were obliged to remain at the Abbey a matter of ten days, while a bridge was built across the gave. To pass the time it was agreed they would assemble daily and tell stories that the narrator had "either seen with his eyes or heard from the lips of a faithful witness." So, after hearing mass in the morning, they assembled each day at noon in "that pleasant meadow that is stretched along the gave, where so thickly do the trees grow that the sun can not pierce through them with his heat," and spun the tales that make up The Heptameron.

It was in piecing together the scraps that each of us remembered of the adventures that produced that book that we passed the warm noonday hour. If it was not in the identical spot where Oisille and her companions had whiled away their September afternoons, it was at least a fair counterfeit and a most agreeable shaded meadow, it was by the lively Aspe, and it was by the ruins of the same old convent of Notre Dame de Sarrance.

CHAPTER XII

The High Pyrenees

THE HIGH PYRENEES—SPA AFTER SPA—CAUTERETS AND ITS NIGHT BELLS—THE CIRQUE DE GAVARNIE—A TOWN OF LIGHT—A FORTIFIED CHURCH—MYSTERIOUS CAGOTS—NATURE'S STEAM HEATING—MOTORING NEAREST THE SKY—THE PIC DU MIDI DE BIGORRE—LUCHON, QUEEN OF THE PYRENEES—A LAKE OF ETERNAL ICE—THE GRANITE OCEAN.

There is no part of the Pyrenees so lacking in interest but that one is poorer in experience by not having seen it. There is not a valley, or a crest, or a ruined château, an isolated church, a town or a village, that has not some feature that rewards a visit. If, however, one ascends from the plains of France with limited time at one's disposal, and may not cruise along the whole range from sea to sea, and sees all else and fails to see that sector between the valley of the Gave d'Ossau and the higher valley of the Garonne River, he can not rightly claim to have seen the supreme and alluring features of these mountains, their beauty and their wonders raised to the highest degree.

The heart of the Pyrenees is truly found in the wonderland between the country which environs the miniature watering places of Eaux-Chaudes and Eaux-Bonnes and that about Luchon, which modestly admits itself the

Queen of the Pyrenees. Most of it lies along the southern side of the *département* which is so accurately named Hautes-Pyrénées. Only the first miles of the road on the west are in Basses-Pyrénées, and one reaches Luchon just over the eastern border in Haute-Garonne. It is quite naturally the part of these mountains best known to those who seek their sports, their waters and their wonders. To many travelers and writers it has been all that there was to their Pyrenees. Though acquaintance with its valleys and passes and spas does not acquaint one with more than a quarter of the range yet it does qualify him to say that he has seen those places and things there to which the superlative is most justly applied.

If it does not embrace most of the thermal stations at least it does embrace the most important. Here are the principal *cirques,* those natural wonders so particularly characteristic of these mountains. Here the road rides higher than any place else between the two seas; at one's elbow are always the higher peaks of the Franco-Spanish frontier; and our way leads eventually to a very close and all embracing panorama of the very highest summits.

Although heretofore we had moved in a general way from east to west, we had been well advised to go to Pau before ascending to Luchon, and thus to see that spa after visiting the smaller, though scarcely less well known, watering-places of Eaux-Chaudes, Eaux-Bonnes, Cauterets, and Bagnères-de-Bigorre. In following this

plan we were obliged to reverse our direction and to travel westward over the road which most nearly parallels the crests on the international boundary. From the relatively mild green mountains about the lower Gave d'Ossau, where from an altitude of two thousand feet one feels an intimacy with the surrounding crests of six thousand feet, there is a constant crescendo of natural beauties, abnormalities and scenic excesses until, from the plateau of Superbagnères, one looks down four thousand feet into the valley of Luchon, and off and up to the arc of the wildest and highest and least accessible summits, another five thousand feet nearer the sky.

Many of the points may be reached by particular branch lines, which burrow up the gorges, from the east and west railway among the foot-hills, but not all of the interesting places by any means. It is the white ribbon of the Pyrenean Road which makes all centers accessible and connects them not only with each other but with the outside world below, a product of engineering which over a similar distance is not surpassed elsewhere in Europe.

As their names imply the towns of Eaux-Chaudes and Eaux-Bonnes belong to that extensive family of Pyrenean spas. They are within seven miles of each other and somehow have a faculty of getting themselves confused in people's remembrance of them. They are tiny towns, numbering their inhabitants in modest hundreds, though the preponderance is in favor of Eaux-Bonnes. They are little distinguished by their names, for the

Eaux-Chaudes are not less good than the Eaux-Bonnes, and the Eaux-Bonnes are not less hot than the Eaux-Chaudes. What most effectively distinguish them, and make them remarkable, are the approaches.

One attains Eaux-Chaudes by a road which is but a shelf hundreds of feet up the wall of a gorge of the raging Gave d'Ossau, a gorge so narrow that the cliffs seem to meet overhead. The village is set down by the torrent where, between the lofty walls, there is just room for the little houses and the tireless foaming stream.

Eaux-Bonnes though higher than Eaux-Chaudes is, too, set in a gorge, but the views about are so engaging that they, rather than the gorge, become the memory. Here the aspect of all things is as if the neighborhood were the abode of sirens of the mountains, whose smiles radiate everywhere, and lure one on. Actually, however, the only sirens we saw were rather heavy of hip and not a little itching as to palm. Lest this be misunderstood I must in justice add that, though a hard training in a school of necessity has made of the French a shrewd business folk, it can not lightly be intimated that, here at least, they "scent a customer in every visitor." Nowhere else along the roadside in France does one so often come upon a reasonable cordiality or a self-respecting affability as in these mountains.

Up the valley of the Gave d'Ossau from Eaux-Chaudes runs the first vehicular road to cross the range into Spain west of more than one hundred savage impas-

sable miles of the central range. It is a popular drive, and, when the summits are passed, it descends among bewildering panoramic expanses to the baths of Panticosa. From Eaux-Bonnes it is the great Pyrenean Road itself which leads on to Cauterets.

The first stage is over the Col d'Aubisque which separates the valley of the Gave d'Ossau from that of the Gave de Pau. The pass is on one of the many short massive mountain spurs, so characteristic of the topography of the north slope of the Pyrenees, which reach high up and at right angles to the flank of the main range, supporting it like giant buttresses on a fabulous cathedral. The way is weird and wild, and the white road lifts its girdle around the hills at some dizzy altitudes.

The other passengers—ten in all, in one of the motor-coaches of the route—greeted the ascent and the unfolding of the scenes, with a rapture that was spontaneous and deserved, for they had come east from Biarritz over the lesser mountains and were enjoying their first experience of genuine sky climbing. We, however, having climbed the greater pass of Puymorens, were robbed of the excitement of a totally unique experience. Besides, there was the Col de Tourmalet ahead and we had the figures on that. Having crossed the second highest vehicular pass in these mountains, and knowing we were soon to cross the very highest, we were not going to expend enthusiasm on the mere third highest, even if it did reveal nature in one of its most heroic expressions, even

if the engineer's art here expressd itself close to the limit, even if every one about us was fascinated by the majesty of the vast scene. With real heroism we said nothing to spoil the others' ingenuous pleasure. We kept a restrained and superior silence. Only, it was a little galling to notice that no one noticed our restraint, nobody asked why. They seemed to find sufficient in the splendors of the unfolding mountains to divert their attention completely from us and our calmness.

The supreme effect on this road is to be had by leaving the car and making the half-hour climb of the Soum de Grüm, where, at one time, one may look up to the summits of Anie, the Sesques, Ger, Gabizos and Midi d'Ossau; the first, at eight thousand, two hundred and fifteen feet, being the lowest, and the last, at nine thousand, four hundred and sixty-five feet, being the highest.

Once over the pass the stern aspect of everything changed. Below lay the green carpet on the banks of the Gave de Pau; forests, fields and villages multiplied; and, though the mountains heaped higher on the south, for a moment we had a glimpse northward down on the billowy country toward Lourdes and Tarbes, and into the Valley of Lavedan. That valley became rather more in interest than a mere landscape when we learned that it is the breeding ground of the Pyrenean dogs, which are such fine friends of the flocks and herds on the upper pastures and such formidable foes of bear and wolves wherever met. Then, by the gave itself, at shady Ar-

gelès, the road turned sharp to the right, southward, and brought us face to face with, and close up to, the main range, and it climbed sinuously as a serpent up the gorges of the gave to Cauterets.

We descended from the car at Argelès, and saw it roll away to begin its climb to Cauterets, while we began ours on foot to St-Savin. This is a little village overlooking Argelès from a terrace upon the shoulder of Mont Cabaliros. St-Savin is built about the ruins of a medieval abbey. It was all very well to be told that here was the ancient Palatium Æmi-lianum, that Charlemagne himself founded the abbey, that St. Savin, noble and hermit, had made it his retreat, but nothing else about it seemed to us so real as the visit here of our friends, those lively gentlefolk, who, having fled from the water-soaked houses of Cauterets, found the good abbot here so hospitable, then pressed on, probably over the very road by which we had come, to join Dame Oisille in the shady glade by the Aspe.

St-Savin furnished an admirable balcony from which to sweep again the valley about Argelès. This valley has been called the "Eden of the Pyrenees," thus ranking it among the six, or ten or twenty, loveliest valleys of these mountains, to all of which the same expressive if not too truthful epithet has been applied. Three châteaux are here at one time in view: that of the lords of Abillac, which we passed in ascending; that of Beaucens, on its own isolated elevation, across the gave, on the flank of

Davantaïgue; and that of Miramont near by. The first two have succumbed to the ravages of many centuries of neglect, taking a new beauty from ever-compensating nature who, though she destroys, seems always to give grace to the ruins she creates, and with inimitable art to redecorate them with moss and shrub and vine. Miramont is not so old as the other two, and its fine condition is the measure of the popular devotion to Cyprien Despourrins, who lived here in the eighteenth century, and whom France reveres without a rival as the poet of the Pyrenees.

Another thrill, perhaps the real thrill of St-Savin at least on this visit, was to encounter here for the first time the trail of that epic hero, the paladin Roland, whose exploits elsewhere in these mountains seem to have contributed as much to their fame as to his. His alleged adventure in this neighborhood was the mere inconsequential slaying of two giants. Their offense was not that they were giants but that they were impious.

The steam railway comes south here as far as Pierrefitte, four miles beyond Argelès, and then electricity lifts the train up the inclines, around curves and through a mountain, and on to Cauterets, achieving an additional sixteen hundred feet of altitude in three miles of the way. In general features the valley of the Gave de Cauterets is not unlike most of the valleys of the north side of the range. Each has its narrow opening or gate, at least one narrow gorge between precipices, sometimes more,

through which the torrent plunges restlessly over a bed of enormous boulders. In the interval between gorges the valley opens and presents a small but level floor, always fertile and generally the site of a village. Cauterets sits at the south end of such a tiny valley, seemingly at the mouth of another gorge.

Its springs are its reason for its existence. They were known in the tenth century but their reputation grew enormously under the personal patronage of Marguerite de Valois and other of the royal court. All the fashionable world of France and Spain has been coming to Cauterets ever since. It is the highest though not the largest watering place in the Pyrenees. Thus to the efficacy of its springs it adds the delightful air of three thousand feet altitude and the exhilarating sport of mountain climbing, for it is the center of peaks which here attain rank very nearly equal to the supreme summits farther east.

The valley before Cauterets is guarded on the east by the Pic de Vidos and on the west by the Pic de Cabaliros. The mountains about the town are not higher than these but seem so because they are so near and so precipitous. Far up their lower wooded face the green is dotted with vivid white villas, like tiny castles in the air. We wondered how their occupants got up and down, and if it were on these steep ramps that the celebrated climbing legs of Cauterets are developed, for there is a saying in the Pyrenees that "He who would be a good climber

must have the stomach of Barèges, the head of Luz and the legs of Cauterets." The real art of mountain climbing, however, extends itself on summits out of sight of the town, back near the Spanish frontier, which is not far. The classic climbs are up the sharp granite tooth of the Vignemale, the highest peak on the French side of the frontier, and up others along the international line that are nearly as high.

Here, as nowhere else, I seemed to find the personnel and the paraphernalia of *alpinisme*. Here the guide is everywhere in evidence, and unmistakable. He wears the rakish black velvet basque cap as a matter of course. His shoes are rugged though somewhat belied by white spats. His knickerbockers fall full at the knees. His glory, however, is his blue jacket covered with buttons radiant as new half-dollar pieces. He never by any chance buttons up his coat, which is only practical, for it would take far too much time, as it would also to unbutton it again. He carries a sharp ferruled staff with a businesslike handle, partly pick and partly adze. But no one is modish here who has not a sharp metal ferrule on his walking-stick.

Cauterets is an odd town, crushed in between the mountains, small, lively, all the requirements of a spa, yet on the surface just a jumble of contradictions. There are no magnificent distances here excepting up. But even the sky seems small, the circling mountains let us see so little of it. At first we thought the town had an

extraordinary number of parks, until we discovered that we were continually coming upon the one and only park it has. The boulevard is only a few hundred feet long, but it looks like a bit out of modern Paris. Some other streets suggest that possibly, once upon a time, the gave escaped control and tossed the town about, and it had never since recovered from the confusion in which it found itself. The gave indeed dominates the town, tearing right through its center, turning streets aside, cutting others off sharply before they are well begun, and, in general, behaving like the wilful noisy high-handed torrent that it is.

It was not, however, the gay *mélange* of buildings of this spa, nor the savage high hinterlands, not the mysterious inaccessible peaks, nor the bebuttoned guides, nor the head-strong gave which, in my memory of Cauterets, distinguished it from other watering-places along the range. It was none of these, for, in some degree, they distinguish nearly all the others. To me Cauterets is, apart from all else, remembered for the voice of its nights, the soft silver bells of the Hotel de Ville.

We arrived late one evening at the height of the season. The streets, the park, the cafés seemed to hold all that could be squeezed into them. So apparently the hotels, too, for at each one we were told with polite firmness that every room was occupied, "though perhaps the neighboring hotel might have a vacancy." We were finally taken into an hotel that was far from being the

The Pyrenean Road, climbing over the pass known as the Col d'Aspin

Bagnères-de-Luchon

neighbor of the first one visited. Before I reached my room I longed for the legs of Cauterets. It was at the top of six flights of steep steps, without benefit of elevator. If there is a view in the Pyrenees it is generally compensation for many evils, and there was a view from my window. On the same level and almost within reach was the belfry of the Hotel de Ville. Below the evening crowds surged about under the gay street and shop lights. Above the black silhouette of Péguère stood against a cloudless starry sky.

All night long the town bells across the way struck every quarter, but they never announced the hour. Delicately, almost in a whisper, with the white tone of a timid child, they reminded you that it was a quarter after, or half past, or a quarter of, or exactly the hour—but never exactly what hour. It was a little like the conversation of some pleasant-voiced people who talk a great deal but manage pleasantly to say nothing. The bells surely could not have been heard far, yet no one is far away in Cauterets. Perhaps they were not silver either, however precisely their tone was. But how agreeable it was to lie there, and to speculate on this odd manner of announcing the time, and to let such sweet tones ring you off to sleep. And how bewildering it was in the morning to be awakened suddenly by eight thundering strokes of a bell which was as loud and strong as the others had been soft and sweet. It hung over the way in the belfry with the others, but in waking I thought it in

the room. All day long it struck the hour, with quarter-hour comment by the little bells, but always it was silent after sundown. Civic courtesy refrained from disturbing the sleep of visitors, it seemed, and compromised by meaningless but charming delicate music by the quarter-hour carillon.

The Cirque de Gavarnie is from Cauterets, as the crow flies—if crows flew in these altitudes—a distance of fifteen miles. There is no road. The grape-vine trail over the pass, from the Latour valley to that of the Gave de Pau, in places turns back even the donkeys. But, with a guide, it is a favorite excursion for sound legs and good wind. We preferred, however, the longer festoon of the motor road. This way the distance was doubled and there was some doubling of the trail we had already journeyed, but, in traveling, it is always interesting to see the backs of things you have seen the front of before.

The *cirques* are the most unique and distinctive natural wonders of the Pyrenees. They are vast circles, of high deserted precipices, set into pockets of the peaks, and are accessible only to foot climbers. The principal *cirques* are Capcir, Pla de la Gole, Barrosa, d'Estaubé, Troumouse and Gavarnie. The first three are inferior to Troumouse and Gavarnie. Capcir is near the sources of the River Aude, south of Carcassonne. The others are roundabout and not far from Gavarnie. All these are in France except Barrosa, which is in the Spanish side of the Pic de Troumouse, as the Cirque de Troumouse is in

the French side of that same mountain, across whose crest runs the international line.

The floor of the Cirque de Gavarnie has an altitude of five thousand, three hundred and eighty feet. Its precipitous wall rises to varying heights, of which a comparative notion may be had from the height of the waterfalls which tumble down its face; except in the dry season, the Cascade de Gavarnie falling one thousand, three hundred and eighty-five feet. It is the highest waterfall in Europe. Other walls rise in tiers behind it reaching up to the terraces of snow and ice under the crests nearly five thousand feet above.

The first sight of the Cirque de Gavernie is one of the abiding experiences of any one who has stood before it. It has inspired many great writers none of whom, however, has eclipsed the rhapsody of Victor Hugo:

> You may have seen the Alps, the Andes and the Cordilleras; you may have had the Pyrenees before your eyes for weeks; but, whatever you may have seen, that which you now behold resembles nothing that you may have met with elsewhere. . . . In the midst of the capricious curves of the mountains, bristling with angles both obtuse and acute, suddenly appear innumerable straight lines, simple and subdued, horizontal and vertical, parallel and cutting each other at right angles, and combined in such a fashion that their union produces the form of some extraordinary—some impossible object, at once resplendent and real, and impregnated with azure and sunlight. . . .
>
> It is at once a mountain and a wall. It is the most mysterious edifice of the most mysterious of architects. It is the Coliseum of nature—Gavarnie.
>
> Picture to yourself this magnificent silhouette as it makes its first appearance at a distance of three leagues.

It is a long, dark wall, every perfection and every indentation of which is marked by lines of snow, every platform of which is covered with a glacier. Near the middle are two great towers. One of these, which is towards the east, is square and turns one of its corners towards France. The other, which is near the west, seems to be less a tower than a sheaf of turrets. Both are covered with snow. Towards the right are deep breaches, deep notches cut into the wall like two vases filled with clouds. Finally, at the western extremity, and still towards the right, is a kind of enormous border, puckered with a thousand tiers, and presenting to the eye, in monster proportions, what would be called in architecture the section of an amphitheater.

Picture this to yourself as I saw it—the black wall, the black towers, the dazzling snow, the blue sky; in a word, a thing of perfection—great beyond expression, serene even to sublimity.

This is all graphically true, but, strangely, Hugo does not mention the feature of Gavarnie which relieves it of its profound austerity, whose grace and movement give the whole scene brilliancy and life. That is the numberless cascades which fall over every portion of the precipices. They stimulated his compatriot, Taine, to this flight of rhetorical figures:

The streamlets of water come by thousands from the highest layer, leap from step to step, cross their stripes of foam, wind, unite and fall by a dozen brooks that slide from the last layer in flakey streaks to lose themselves in the glaciers at the bottom. The thirteenth cascade on the left is thirteen hundred and eighty-five feet high. It falls slowly, like a drooping cloud or the unfolding of a muslin veil; the air softens its fall; the eye follows complacently the graceful undulations of the beautiful airy veil. It glides the length of the rock, and seems to float rather than to fall. The sun shines, through its plume, with the softest and loveliest splendor. It reaches the

bottom like a bouquet of slender waving feathers, and springs backward in a silver dust; the fresh and transparent mist swings about the rock it bathes, and its rebounding train mounts lightly along the courses. No stir is in the air; no noise; no living creature in this solitude. You hear only the monotonous murmur of the cascades resembling the rustle of the leaves that the wind stirs in the forest.

And when you turn away, and descend the defile, and resume the road, you truly seem to see nothing but that singular splendid apparition. It remains with you as a fairy reality like "those supernatural horizons" which are sometimes seen "on the confines of one's dreams."

The ride down the valley of the Gave de Pau, which has its source behind in the face of the precipice of Gavarnie, was made under dark clouds which obscured the sun and came down between the mountains, angry and threatening, as if ready to open and pour on us the waters of another deluge. Then just in sight of Luz and of its high suburb, St-Sauveur, they dissolved and disappeared and the sun flooded everything with golden light. It was becoming thus to come upon this cheery little town, since its name means light. It was called Luz first, a local legend says, by Spanish bandits and smugglers, who came over the range from Aragon, by the Brèche de Roland, so-called because that knight here cleaved the mountain-top asunder with his fabulous sword Durandel. They were terrified by the chaos of Gavarnie and the gloomy gorges below, but when through them they saw a dazzling white light beyond and, reach-

ing it, found it a village full of life and sunshine, they called that village Luz. So rich are the Pyrenees in lore and in heroic tales of the dim remote ages when history got itself carried forward only by word of mouth, that there seems everywhere to be two interests combating for our attention, the epic reality of nature and the romance of legendary and historic fragments.

Here still at Luz we were face to face with more dim history in the presence of the church of the Templars with the sealed door of the Cagots. It is a strange pile of masonry, half a place of worship, half a citadel, a church with lofty belfry on one side, a huge battlemented donjon on the other, and surrounded by a high battlemented wall. It recalls the descriptions of the fortified churches built by the crusaders in Syria.

Here for the first time, in this little door for the Cagots, we encountered something concrete about this mysterious race. We had heard vague hints of them from the moment we entered the mountains, but especially here in Hautes-Pyrénées. No one seems to know who precisely were the Cagots, or whence they came, or why they were reviled and kept apart as unclean. The most insistent theory connects them with the crusaders who returned from the Holy Land infected with leprosy. They at any rate suffered under a degradation rarely imposed by society except on such unfortunates, and whether their leprosy was physical or spiritual, it united them into a despised race and as such they existed and,

apparently, have expired. The door of the Cagots at Luz is small and mean, and through it they were required to pass while others used the great door. Though it is now sealed, the tradition of its victims still hangs about the old church, and in a vague way all about the higher reaches of the savage valleys in this section.

There is a pleasanter tradition associated with one of the springs in neighboring St-Sauveur. It, too, has been closed like the door of the Cagots, but for quite another reason. We heard it first in a railway carriage, down in the valley of the Garonne, on the way to Tarbes. A young married couple came into the compartment at St-Gaudens, and found an acquaintance in a middle-aged passenger whom they called doctor. When we had adjusted ourselves to the newcomers, and the train was rattling off toward Montréjeau, suddenly, after some imperfectly understood preliminaries, I heard the doctor ask the young lady if she were on her way to the springs of St-Sauveur. Whereupon she blushed, and gave him the French equivalent for "Certainly not!" Others suppressed smiles, which indicated that the point was not lost on them. But a heavy silence settled over us and it was only after the young people descended, a quarter of an hour farther on, that I had from the doctor the point of the matter. He said that his young friends were childless and he had innocently teased her about the Woman's Spring at St-Sauveur. A legend attaches to the spring, he said, that the shepherdess, Helen de la

Bonbère, and her husband were lamenting their childless state when a fairy appeared to her and advised her to bathe in a certain spring. Some months later the pretty shepherdess gave birth to twins as beautiful as their happy mother. The news of Helen's experience spread and the women of the neighboring valleys came in such numbers, and with such unfailing results, that the authorities closed the spring. It has since been known as the "Source des Dames," and it is accessible now only by special permission.

The distance from Luz to Luchon by the Pyrenean Road is sixty miles. It leaps over the barriers between three valleys by way of three high passes, the first of them, the Col de Tourmalet, between the valley of the Gave de Pau and the valley of the River Adour, which is the highest pass for vehicular traffic in the entire range. The crossing is really mountain cruising raised to its highest effect. Nature in the upper Bastan valley, which leads to Tourmalet, is stern and uncompromising but splendid. There is little vegetation and even the green forests which cushion most of the mountainsides here are conspicuously absent. We wondered how, in a country without coal and in a vast region without wood, the poor natives cooked their food, not to mention how they kept themselves warm in winter. The difficulty was acknowledged, and it was said that the inhabitants of the village of Barèges, which at the moment lay in our way, often fly from the cold and snow to the comfort of

a subterranean cavern, where they find warmth in the vapors which rise from a hot sulphurous pool therein, as it were in a community center made cosy with nature's own steam heat.

The way here is made continuously superb by the height and bleak grandeur of the mountains which frame the pictures. On the right side, or rather, since the road spirals in such a manner as to make right and left meaningless as directions, on the south side rise the snow-capped Ayré, Néouvielle, and Arbizon above a barrage of other summits, and ahead on the other side, dominating the entire approach, rises the pyramidal rock of the Pic du Midi de Bigorre. The road lashes about like a cat chasing its own tail. It zigzagged to such an extent that it was remarked that we could have ridden with one wheel on the zig and another on the zag. Finally, at the summit, there was again as at the Col de Puymorens and on the other passes, before and after, that high, aloof, detached sense of airplaning, but with the wheels of the car reassuringly clinging to earth.

The Pic du Midi de Bigorre, at nine thousand, four hundred and forty feet, is not in the select company of the very highest peaks of the Pyrenees, but it is one of the most admired and popular. It is admired because of its superb silhouette, accented by its detachment from the other peaks. It is popular because it may be ascended with comparative ease, part of the way by motor, and the last five hours by horseback, and the view from

the top is probably the most varied and extensive in the range. Toward Spain it commands a sixty-five-mile sweep of some of the highest peaks of the Pyrenees, from the Maladetta group above Luchon to the Pic de Ger above Eaux-Bonnes. Toward France there are no barriers save the billowy foot-hills which rim the foreground, and then sink away revealing the plain beyond. It is said that, with proper glasses and atmospheric conditions, one may from here see even as far as the Atlantic Ocean ninety-two miles west.

Our vistas there were somewhat obscured by small white clouds which filled the valleys as well as the sky as far as the eye could see. It was a brilliantly sunny day, the sky when visible was a solid sea of azure, but everywhere were the broken white patches, clouds of all sizes and shapes, as if we stood in the midst of a thousand islands of the sky.

Beyond Tourmalet the valleys are again green with forests, grain and gardens, sparkling with bright white villages, and, after the sky-ride of that pass, even the Col d'Aspin and the Col de Peyresourde are taken easily, powerless to give the thrill that they otherwise might. At the village of Ste-Marie-de-Campan the road forks. To the north it drops down to the Bagnères-de-Bigorre. I regretted not seeing this spa, a little because it is one of the most admired in these mountains, and a great deal because of the astonishing statement I saw in regard to the town. It said: "Bagnères-de-Bigorre has a popula-

tion of eight thousand, five hundred people with an altitude of one thousand, eight hundred and five feet." However, we missed those phenomenally tall Bigorrans for our way lay to the right to the Bagnères-de-Luchon. We entered Luchon by the narrow crooked streets of the old town, wondering what sort of a queen was this enthroned among her mountains, until we circled before the church and came up the broad Allées d'Etigny, and then we understood.

The pocket in which Luchon has chosen to set itself down is miraculously level for a mountain valley. It is about a mile long and nearly that at its broadest. A torrent, rather ostentatiously calling itself a river, but well named the Pique, comes whipped white from the upper gorge. It dissolves its foam into more leisurely black depths as it crosses the level green shelf. From a rift in the mountains on the west comes another stream, and joins the Pique and, as the valley narrows, the two tumble together down other sharp descents. These streams trace two sides of a triangle with a perpendicular green barrier on its west side.

At one corner of this triangle along the lesser stream imagine a tight little irregular eighteenth century town. From this trace toward the upper angle, where the Pique is tossed out of its gorge, a broad shaded avenue, lined with shops and cafés and roomy hotels, and losing itself in a woodland sloping park before the marble colonnade of the Baths. Imagine a lovely wooded drive on the

other side of the triangle, along the River Pique, faced with villas. In the center of the triangle imagine a park in a high iron palisade, within which are a lake, winding walks, a gay promenade about a kiosk where a band plays day and night, and terminating in a casino which houses gaming, dancing, and an operatic and dramatic company recruited from the theaters of Paris. People the whole place with a throng of French health and pleasure seekers, with a strong admixture of Spanish and an occasional visitor from another country, and you have Luchon.

Either the French are unwilling frankly to admit their leisure or they are inordinately devoted to water cures. That is what one is driven to suspect here in the Pyrenees where no resort thrives solely on the delight of its climate or as a playground for vacationists. Every one of them has its waters, its hot springs, its thermal establishments, its cures, and seemingly every one seeks their aid. And not only do the curative springs bubble from every mountainside, but each one is the heart of a spa, and each spa has its faithful and confident clientele, and so numerous are the springs that the baths of the Pyrenees form an almost unbroken line all along the range from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. There are on the French slopes alone more than fifty watering-places, great and small, and some very small.

Even though one comes to Luchon for the waters, however pleasantly he pass the time in the diverse di-

versions of the casino or in the cafés along the Allées d'Etigny, the unique opportunity here is to explore the neighborhood, for Luchon sits at the feet of the loftiest peaks of the Pyrenees.

Actually its situation is midway in a curious break in the range. It is generally said that the main range at its crest presents a line between France and Spain which is unbroken from sea to sea. This is not perfectly exact. The crest lines, starting from the Mediterranean and from the Atlantic, do not exactly meet. They miss each other by about twelve miles, and the international frontier runs north and south this distance to unite the ends. Luchon on the west side of this line actually sees Spain to the northward when she looks in that direction toward Mount Bacanère which is one of the corner posts.

On the east side of this jog in the frontier is the beautiful Vall d'Aran, which presents the geographical curiosity of the Cerdagne reversed. The upper Cerdagne holds the sources of the Spanish River Segre yet it is French territory. The Vall d'Aran, though in Spain, holds the head waters of the great French River Garonne. The Vall d'Aran is one of the favorite sights hereabouts even though one goes no farther into it than to climb the mountain wall east of Luchon and peer down from the Portillon du Burbe, with one foot in France and the other foot in Spain.

Even wilder scenery is found in the ride up the Valley of Lys to the Gouffre-d'Enfer (Whirlpool of Hell);

in the climb to the Vénasque Pass; and in the climb to the Lac d'Oo, a small tarn, two hundred and nineteen feet deep and cupped in the crags at an altitude of five thousand feet, whose silence is broken by the laughter of a waterfall in its leap off a ledge nearly one thousand feet above. Farther up among the summits, at nearly ten thousand feet, is the even more interesting natural curiosity of the little tarn of the Portillon d'Oo, whose surface is frozen the year around. The snow is ever present on the northern slopes along the central sector of the range, but a perpetually frozen lake seemed much more of a natural curiosity in a country so far south.

Nothing else about Luchon, however, compares with the outlook from the heights of Superbagnères, a plateau far above the town. It is reached by a cog railway. On its bleak knob stands one of the finest hotels in France; the slopes roundabout provide a playground for winter sports. These, however, are but incidental to the presence of the highest peaks of the Pyrenees.

The ride up, although ascension seems the more significant word, was made amid low wraith-like clouds through which the widening vistas played hide-and-seek. It began in the almost tropical foliage of the valley of the Pique, the green wayside colorful with patches of crimson berries. This was left behind for successive altitudes of giant ferns, hardy holly and stern pines, the pines hung with a strange gray moss which made them look like the very ghosts of themselves. On the bald

summit where the line ended tiny patches of moss and wild grass only thinly screened the rocks, and the fresh breeze from the adjacent snow fields scattered such of the lower clouds as had not taken refuge in the valleys roundabout below. Above, the sun was obscured by one great gray cloud, which covered most of the sky like a great umbrella, and softened the colors of everything beneath it. Beyond its rim, the unseen sun poured down its golden rays upon the environing range with regal abundance, and the gray summits and the white glaciers stood out with matchless splendor.

Nowhere else in the Pyrenees did we see a sight comparable to this. At our feet, over a precipice, nearly four thousand feet below, huddled the gray roofs of Luchon, in their setting of green. Roundabout them were what appeared to be the closed ranks of white headstones of half a dozen cemeteries. But headstones do not move in the breeze, and a second glance showed that they were the linens of the Luchon laundries, drying and bleaching in the sun. Through the breach where the River Pique plunges down to meet the Garonne reached a long file of diminishing mountaintops like steps descending to the plains of France, disappearing on a low horizon in misty distances which made one with them.

To the south, beyond the chasm of the invisible valley of Lys, other giant steps climbed the nearer peaks to that line of summits which support the imaginary international line. All on this side is France. Behind the

high barrier Spain is visible in sharp flashes on the sun-lit pinnacles of the very highest summits of the range. They are grouped about the Monts Maudits out of which rises Anéto the supreme peak of the Pyrenees.

Yet Anéto or Néthou, does not seem higher than the others. It is the particular characteristic of the Pyrenees that they disclose few instances of a detached peak which eclipses its surroundings. The Bernese Oberland contains the largest number of high summits of any department of Switzerland. It boasts six mountains between ten and fifteen thousand feet in height. They rise conspicuously, in each instance, above an environment of noticeably lesser heights. In a similar area in this portion of the Pyrenees, however, one may see twenty-one mountains between ten and eleven thousand feet high. This sector of the range is rated "the most numerous concentrated assembly of elevated summits in Europe."

The vast outlook upon this seemingly endless succession of gray and white peaks, as seen from this high though lesser mountaintop, produced the effect of gazing at the mirage of an ocean, lashed to a hurricane by some jovian fury, and struck suddenly to stone and ice. And when the feeble understanding gropes back toward the dim ages which tossed them into their epic heaps, one realizes it was in their quite recent years that the waters of the Deluge rose and fell about their crests. The span of their life makes Adam seem something of a contemporary of ours.

CHAPTER XIII

Lourdes

LOURDES—A SPIRITUAL SPA—APPARITIONS OF A SHEPHERDESS—EXTRAORDINARY AFTERMATH—THE RELIGIOUS CITY—PILGRIMS—HOSPITALITY—A DAY AT LOURDES—DAYBREAK DEVOTIONS—THE BATHS—PRAYING FOR MIRACLES—MEDICAL INVESTIGATIONS—BRINGING BENEDICTION TO THE BEDRIDDEN—THE PROCESSION OF THE CANDLES AT NIGHT.

In these mountains so abundantly endowed with natural springs, each one containing chemical properties designed to cure some particular ill of the many that human flesh is heir to, there is one spring to whose water has been attributed supernatural power, and to whose use has been attributed a long list of cures of all kinds which has made the grotto from which it flows the greatest place of pilgrimage in the Christian world. This is the spring in "The Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes."

Lourdes is a small town in the Hautes-Pyrénées, on the railway between Toulouse and Pau, at the mouth of the valley of the Gave de Pau where it turns on its way up to Cauterets and to the Cirque de Gavarnie. It is surrounded by low green mountains from one of which, the Ger, there is a notable view which embraces many of the high peaks of the range and a wide expanse of the plain

of France, and from where also may be seen Argelès, Tarbes and Pau.

Originally Lourdes was not notably distinguished from any other town along the range situated on a high detached rock, in a defensive position, at the mouth of a narrow valley. Its earlier history fits comfortably into that skeleton sketch of most Pyrenean towns. On its rock a castle was built which passed successively through the hands of the Romans, the Saracens, the Vandals, the Visigoths and the French. The Moors were in possession when Charlemagne passed this way, and he besieged the castle, as a preliminary to driving them back into Spain. There is a tradition that one day an eagle, having captured a large fish in the lake near by, let it fall into the besieged fortress. Mirot, the Saracen leader, sent the fish to Charlemagne, with this message: "As long as my fish pond supplies me with such food I run no risk of being reduced by famine." The guide to Lourdes, published with the endorsement of the Bishop of Tarbes and Lourdes, from which exclusively all quotations in this chapter will be taken, adds that "the diplomacy of the Bishop of Puy, who took part in the expedition, was more successful than the force of arms. The Bishop approached Mirot and persuaded him to surrender, not to an earthly knight or king, but to the mother of God, Our Lady of Puy." Thus the town's fortunes were linked to the patroness to whom later were ascribed the wonders which are the foundation of its present fame.

For over a thousand years after the Moors surrendered it Lourdes dozed away by the Gave de Pau, until the year 1858, when a young shepherdess announced that she had seen apparitions of the Virgin Mary from whom she had received messages. On her statements has grown the renown of the waters of Lourdes, which now attract annually nearly a million pilgrims from all parts of the world, or more than, in an equal period, visit all the other fifty odd thermal stations of the Pyrenees combined. The old town and its château are now almost entirely eclipsed in interest by a new city with its spiritual citadel, which has grown up on the opposite bank of the gave. The character of this shepherdess, the nature of the communications which she ascribed to a supernatural source, the extraordinary accounts of the results which manifest themselves to-day in the extensive demesne of the famous Catholic shrine, and the routine of the daily visits of the thousands of pilgrims, so interested me on my first visit that I returned several times, but will here give the result of this experience in the terms of a single day at Lourdes.

The name of the shepherdess, who was the object of such favor from the "Lady of Lourdes," was Bernadette Soubirous, the daughter of poor and indolent laboring parents. She was the oldest of six children. She seems to have had no other education than a little catechism, which was taught her in exchange for her time spent in guarding sheep. According to the official guide:

"At fourteen years of age, at the time of the apparitions, she could neither read nor write, and did not even understand French." She spoke one of the Pyrenean dialects.

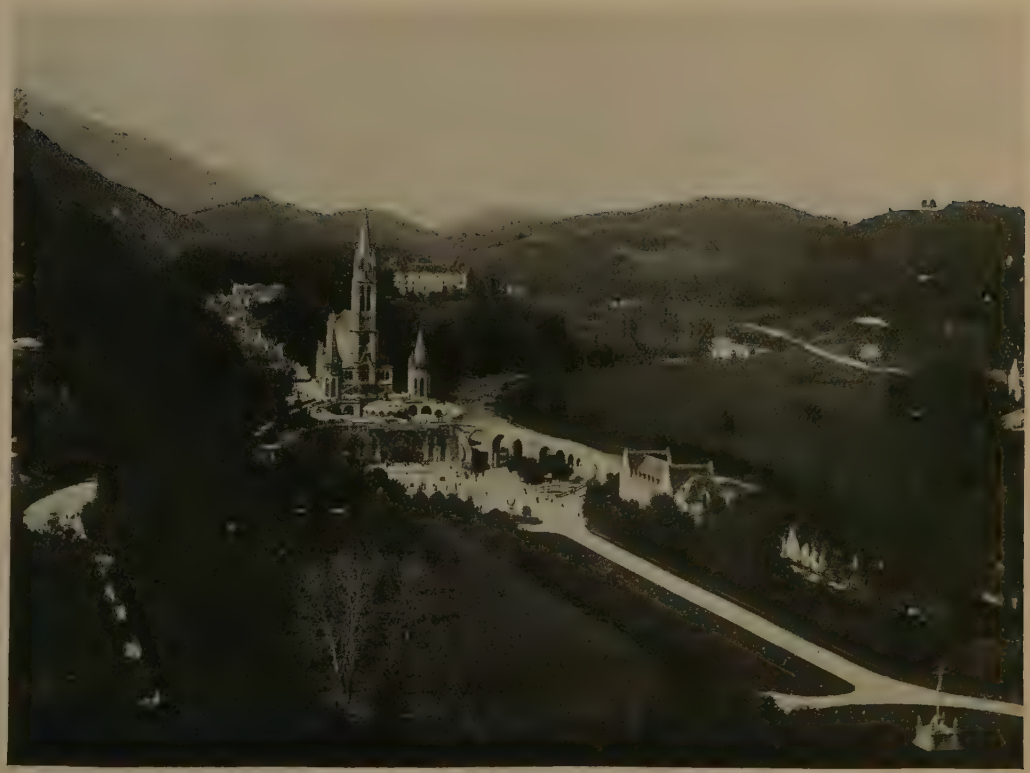
Bernadette was, by nature, of a bright character and even vivacious at times. Her piety was calm and without the exaggeration of nervous hysteria. It was reduced, for the most part, to the recitation of the rosary. She remained throughout absolutely disinterested. Her health was always a cause of anxiety. She was a victim of asthma from her earliest years and her body remained frail and undeveloped.

The apparitions took place between the eleventh of February and the sixteenth of July, 1858. Bernadette . . . had just entered the school directed by the Sisters of Charity of Nevers and annexed to the town hospital of which they were in charge.

The eighteen apparitions are thus described in the official guide:

First Apparition (Thursday 11th. Febr. 1858).—On that day, towards half past twelve Bernadette Soubirous was collecting dry twigs with her sister Marie, aged twelve, and Marie Abadie, aged thirteen. They were at the extremity of the island formed by the Gave and the mill canal. The latter flowed by the foot of the Grotto and was at that season practically dry. In order to pass to the opposite side, Bernadette began to remove her shoes and stockings. All at once she heard a noise, similar to that made by a gust of wind in the neighboring trees. She looked towards the poplars which bordered the edge of the river. They were absolutely still. Then, turning to the opposite direction, she saw that the branches of a rosebush which grew at the opening of an oval niche, were shaking, and within the niche Bernadette perceived a human form. It was that of a "Lady" clad in a white robe, which was held in at the waist by a blue sash. She wore a white veil and on each

The Château of Lourdes



The Church at Lourdes

of her bare feet lay a golden rose. In her joined hands she held a rosary of white beads on a chain of brightest gold. She appeared to be about sixteen or seventeen years of age. She made a sign to Bernadette to approach. The child did not dare to obey. Instinctively she took her rosary. . . . But twice she tried, in vain, to make the sign of the cross. Each time her hand fell, paralyzed, to her side. Then the Lady, as if to encourage her, took the crucifix of the rosary which she held in her hands and made the sign of the cross. Bernadette instantly regained courage, traced upon herself the redeeming sign and began to recite the rosary. When she had finished the apparition had disappeared.

Second Apparition (Sunday, 14th. Febr. 1858).—The following Sunday Bernadette returned to Massabielle with her sister and some friends. As soon as the "Lady" appeared, she threw Holy water towards her, saying: "If you come from God, approach." The apparition, smiling, took a step towards the rosebush, and Bernadette, falling on her knees, became wrapped in contemplation.

Third Apparition (Thursday, 18th. Febr. 1858).—During the third apparition the "Lady" descended, through the opening which connects the niche with the Grotto, until she was near Bernadette. As the child presented her with a paper and a pen, saying: "Please have the goodness to write your name, and that which you desire of me," she spoke for the first time: "It is not necessary to write that which I have to say to you." She added: "Will you do me the favor of coming here for fifteen days?" and "I do not promise you happiness in this world, but in the other." These sentences, and the following ones, were spoken in the Lourdes dialect, but no one ever heard either the words spoken by Bernadette, or those of the apparition.

Fourth Apparition (Friday, 19th. Febr. 1858).—The extasy lasted half an hour. The "Lady" seemed very pleased with Bernadette's fidelity in returning to the Grotto and told her that, later, she would have revelations to make to her.

Fifth Apparition (Saturday, 20th. Febr. 1858).—The "Lady" taught Bernadette word by word and sentence by sentence, a prayer which was destined for her alone. She never revealed it.

Sixth Apparition (Sunday, 21st. Febr. 1858).—The "Lady" said: "You will pray for sinners."

Seventh Apparition (Tuesday, 23rd. Febr. 1858).—The "Lady" told Bernadette three secrets which only concerned herself and which she was not allowed to communicate to anyone, not even to her confessor. She never revealed them.

Eighth Apparition (Wednesday, 24th. Febr. 1858).—The "Lady" thrice repeated the word "Penance, Penance, Penance."

Ninth Apparition (Thursday, 25th. Febr. 1858).—After some moments of prayer, Bernadette heard this order: "Go, drink at the spring, and wash yourself there." This was the miracle of the discovery of the Spring.

Tenth Apparition (Friday, 26th. Febr. 1858).—The "Lady" said, in a tone of deepest sorrow: "You will kiss the ground for sinners."

Eleventh Apparition (Saturday, 27th. Febr. 1858).—During the extasy, which was longer than usual, the "Lady" said to Bernadette: "Go, tell the priests they must build a chapel here." The humble child went, the same day to M. l'Abbé Peyramale, parish priest of Lourdes, and told him of the order she had received.

Twelfth Apparition (Sunday, 28th. Febr. 1858).—Bernadette ascended and descended the Grotto slope, kissing the ground as she went. Two thousand persons imitated her act of Penance.

Thirteenth Apparition (Monday, 1st. of March, 1858).—The "Lady" reproached Bernadette for praying on a rosary belonging to another. She asked her to reclaim her own.

Fourteenth Apparition (Tuesday, 2nd. of March, 1858).—The "Lady" said: "You will go to the priests and tell them to have a chapel built here, and to come here in procession." The message was given on the same day to the Parish Priest of Lourdes. He replied: "If the 'Lady' is she whom you believe her to be, let her prove her identity by suddenly causing the rosebush, on which she stands, to bloom. On that day I will believe what you say, and I shall go with you to Massabielle."

Fifteenth Apparition (Thursday, 4th. of March 1858).—The 4th. of March was the last day of the fifteen during which the "Lady" had asked Bernadette to

come to the Grotto. Bernadette revealed nothing of her intercourse on that day. She was asked how the "Lady" had taken her departure. "As usual," she replied, "she left me, smiling as she went, and she did not say good-bye."

Sixteenth Apparition (Thursday 25th. of March 1858).—That day Bernadette felt herself filled with a great desire to know the "Lady's" name. She asked her thrice, and at the third question, the "Lady" joined her hands on her bosom and looked towards Heaven. Then, slowly disjoining her hands and bending towards the child, who knelt at her feet, she said, in a voice which trembled: "I am the Immaculate Conception," and then she disappeared.

Seventeenth Apparition (Wednesday, 27th. of April 1858).—Doctor Dozous of Lourdes was present. He observed that Bernadette's fingers, which she had held in the flame of a lighted candle for a quarter of an hour, were unburnt. He concluded that such a result was "contrary to the laws of nature," and the incident was afterwards spoken of as "The miracle of the candle."

Eighteenth Apparition (Friday, 16th. of July 1858).—Access to the grotto being prohibited by the Prefecture of Tarbes, Bernadette went to a meadow, on the other side of the Gave, and knelt there facing the grotto. During this apparition, which was to be the last, no word was spoken to the visionary, no trace of sadness marred the joy of her extasy. At the end of a quarter of an hour she saw the Blessed Virgin walk slowly backwards, smiling graciously and bowing her head as she went, until she was enveloped in an aureola of light and finally disappeared into the hollow of the rock. The reflection of the golden rays illuminated the niche for a few seconds and then faded away. The series of apparitions had come to an end.

The subsequent events, pendant on these apparitions, are thus summarized by the same authority:

On Sunday, 28th. of February, 1858, the day of the twelfth apparition, the workmen of Lourdes came to the Grotto, canalized the water from the miraculous spring, and hollowed out a piscina in front of the Grotto.

Already, on the preceding Thursday, 25th. of February having used the miraculous spring water as a lotion, the quarry-man Bouriette had recovered the sight of his right eye, lost twenty years before as the result of an accident.

That day, when but a small quantity of water had, as yet, collected in the newly made piscina, a woman named Bouhehorts-Duconte carried her little boy, Justin, aged two years, to the Grotto. His lower limbs were completely paralyzed, added to which a congestion had placed his life in great danger. During a quarter of an hour the mother held the little dying child in the water of the piscina. Her heroic faith was rewarded. The following day no trace of the congestion could be found, and the child walked like others of his age. Later Justin Bouhehorts grew to be a strong and vigorous man.

The same day, Blaisette Soupenne, who suffered from a painful and obstinate affliction of the eyebrows, was cured, after having used the miraculous water as a lotion three times, of both the affliction and the pain. The eyelids became normal once more.

The cures, as a result of using the Grotto water, or by the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes without the use of the water, have continued since 1858 and are very numerous. Those which are recognized as certain and certified in writing, already form a remarkable series. Between 1858 and 1907 they reached three thousand, eight hundred and three in number and refer to all classes of disease and afflictions, including cancer, tuberculosis, caries of the bone, cholera, tubercular meningitis, spinal diseases, deafness, epilepsy, etc.: every year the "Bureau medical" certifies numerous cures.

In regard to the pilgrimages to Lourdes, the same source adds:

According to the official statistics of the "Annales de la Grotte," four thousand, nine hundred and thirty-seven organized pilgrimages came to Lourdes between 1867-1907, bringing one thousand, eight hundred and thirty-nine bishops and more than four and a half millions of French pilgrims to the Grotto of the appari-

tions. . . . Foreign countries imitated the example of France and sent in the same period of time . . . three hundred and eighty-four pilgrimages.

The extraordinary movement increases constantly, nearly every year the number of pilgrims exceeds in number that of the preceding year.

In 1921 eight hundred thousand persons came to Lourdes. Seven thousand sick were lodged and attended by three hundred and ninety-one doctors, of whom one hundred and five were foreigners. Eighteen authentic cures were certified, the majority of cases being tuberculosis in one or other of its different forms.

The station at Lourdes receives the train much as a hangar receives a dirigible, a hangar so short as to make the dirigible too long for it, yet so wide as to admit six abreast. The character of the place expressed itself at once. Near the doors into the waiting-rooms there reached down the platform a brigade of invalid chairs and stretchers. There were a considerable number of priests, who seemed in transit, and an equal number of nuns, who seemed interested in the arriving train. One noticed also other men and women, who wear no other uniform or badge than a shoulder harness which makes easier the lifting of the stretchers. But they were not interested in our train. They were waiting for one of the pilgrimage trains, several of which arrive every day, though with less frequency in winter, and which always bring a considerable quota of sick. They are members of the Hospitality organization of which more later. Of the others seated or drifting about the station nearly every one had a small blue tin. We had already seen

these tins on the trains in the neighboring mountains, but now, for the first time, learned that they contained the "miraculous water" from the Grotto of Lourdes which was being taken to less fortunate sick who were not able to make the journey to the shrine.

Outside the station there was a dusty little square filled with a confusion of tram-cars, motor-cars and omnibuses of all sorts. The old town is almost immediately at hand after two turns and a slight decline toward the level of the gave. The stream itself is screened by the rock from the crest of which the château commands the valley. But you are unconscious of it so cluttered is its base with the barnacles of houses which cover it. This part of town is not different from any other small town of the French Midi, except for the names of the hotels which, for the most part, appeal to the religious preoccupation of the visitor. There are hotels "de la Chappelle," "Sainte Rose," "Saint Louis de France," "de la Basilique," "Saint Sauveur," "de l'Ange Gardien," "Saint Hubert" (here patron of hunters), "Madonna," "Notre Dame de Sion," "Esperence," "d'Ave Maria Stella," "Aux Cercles Catholiques," "Saint Firmin," "Saint Julien," and others with similar names.

The little streets and the sidewalk cafés are crowded, at least in summer, when I was there, with a restless strolling crowd of pilgrims. Each of them wore a badge, of his national colors, bearing the name of his parish or diocese, according to which had originated the pilgrim-

age. It is after a turn into the long, winding, though still narrow, Rue de la Grotte, that the secular and religious character of the town thoroughly merge. Here is a continuous line of open-front shops, which seem a part of the sidewalk, devoted almost exclusively to the sale of rosaries, statues, candles of all sizes, scapulars, religious pictures, crucifixes, water-tins, more expensive water-bottles enclosed in wicker, post-cards, and all the cheap gaudy souvenirs, which one finds in all popular excursion resorts, here stamped with the effigy of the Madonna of the Grotto. Even the "cinema" theater here partakes of the religious character, for its entertainments consist of reproductions of the eighteen apparitions with explanatory talk; "The Life and Passion of Our Saviour"; and "*Films Chantants Religieux* (*Dernier Création, Film Sensation!*)."

This street maintains this character even after it crosses the Gave, though on the farther side in the elbow of the curving water-way, is the other newer Lourdes, the religious city, the growth of the last three score and nearly ten years since the apparitions. It consists of an enclosed tract, called the Domain, a kind of religious park, in the narrow meadow between a mountain and the gave. Within this enclosure is the grotto which is the supreme attraction for the pilgrims, and all the related buildings and monuments. It is best approached a little farther down the gave, at the point of the elbow the torrent makes in turning, by a bridge which brings one to

the main gates at one end of the axis of the Esplanade des Processions. From these gates one sees at the other end of the Esplanade, at a distance of four hundred yards, against a background of towering green mountainsides, the gray and gold Gothic churches of the Rosary, one above the other, in the embrace of the two curved ramps which lift to the level of the upper church.

The whole ground plan and setting of the domain are dramatically appropriate to the processions and other open air services for which they were devised. The Esplanade is a broad double avenue whose sides are well shaded and whose center, as well as the environing spaces, is adorned with a succession of heroic groups of statuary. They are conventional in design and for the proper appreciation of their art some pious predilection is required. At the farther end of the Esplanade there is, on the left, a Rest House for well pilgrims, and, on the right, a Rest House for the sick on their way from station, hotel or hospital to and from the grotto.

And here, also, is the headquarters of the members of the Hospitality. This organization is a voluntary group of some three hundred women and some four hundred men, who come from all parts of the world, though principally from France, and at their own expense and without remuneration, to assist the helpless sick. They wheel the chairs and carry the litters to and from the trains, the hospitals and the hotels, and to and from the grotto,

the baths and the pious exercises which punctuate a day at Lourdes. Not all of these men and women are young, or of the peasantry. Among them I saw white-bearded men and gray-haired women, with the bearing of the unmistakable patrician, the red ribbon of the Legion of Honor in many buttonholes, but all of them equal in their unselfish disposition to share the menial tasks of their group.

The Esplanade terminates before the church in an architectural effect in many ways suggestive of the plaza of St. Peter's at Rome. This plaza is smaller, however, and it is embraced by inclined curved ramps instead of a level colonnade and the superimposed churches instead of a broad façade present, by reason of forward tapering spires, an effect of graceful height.

Both the lower and the upper churches are fine in their Gothic design and are rich in ornamentation. The more interesting to the stranger is, however, the upper church where the ex-voto of gold and silver, testimonials of cures and other favors, line nearly every inch of the interior walls; the high vaulting is hung with the national banners of all the Christian nations; and there are booths where the priests confess in seemingly every modern language. There are, too, an indefinite number of chapels, some of them mere alcoves barely large enough to receive an altar. On each altar may be found always ready the utensils and vestments for the mass. It is not uncommon for most of these altars to be occu-

pied between six and ten in the morning, according to the number of priests accompanying the pilgrimages present. In the middle of August when the annual National Pilgrimage comes across France, bringing its fifty thousand devotees at one time, it is said that, to accommodate so many visiting priests and communicants, the masses begin on the stroke of midnight and every available chapel is occupied until noon twelve hours later.

The heart of Lourdes is the Grotto of the Apparitions. It is found by passing under the arches of the north ramp. Here flows the "miraculous water" and above it rises the double church of the Rosary. The rock, in which nature hollowed the grotto, is called Massabielle. That is Pyrenean patois, and it signifies the Old Rock. The main opening of the grotto is about forty feet wide and twenty feet high, and its depth is about twenty-five feet. There is a lesser opening, an oval niche, about seven feet high, above and to the right. It was on that spot that Bernadette reported that she saw the apparitions, and, says the guide, "the statue in the niche represents the apparition in the same attitude and place which she occupied when she said 'I am the Immaculate Conception.'"

At the mouth of the grotto there is an altar. Within, the place is dark and funereal, in spite of the flames of hundreds of votive candles, for it has been made black in every part by the smoke of similar candles burnt in such great numbers for so many years. "Thousands,

probably millions of candles have burnt unceasingly at the grotto since the 18th of February, 1858," says the guide. "On that date Bernadette arrived at Massabielle with a blessed candle which she held alight in her hand until the apparition ceased. Before departing the Blessed Virgin asked Bernadette to allow the candle to burn itself out at the grotto. The same day some people left lighted candles at the spot indicated by the Immaculate Mother of God. Since then they have never ceased to be renewed."

All day long the pilgrims wait in line on the right side of the opening and enter here, pass behind the altar and leave by the left side. As they enter they pause to caress the rock nearest the spot above which the statue stands. They pat it lovingly, others kiss it, and as they pass they press against it rosaries and other devotional objects to take back with them to those in far places who could not come themselves to solicit the benediction of the venerated place. Inside the grotto the pilgrims kneel in prayer on every available foot of space, leaving room only for the slow interminable procession to wind through. Whenever one kneeling pilgrim rises and retires another drops to his knees in the place. In an angle of the rocks at the back of the grotto there is a hollow space "into which pilgrims may place their written petitions to Our Lady of Lourdes." I found it always heaping full.

At the left of the grotto hang hundreds of crutches

and canes, which were discarded by pilgrims who came needing them and left proclaiming their cure. These reach far up the rock even above the adjacent bath-houses. Near by, on this same side, there are taps in the rock, from which flows the water of Lourdes, openly accessible, and here all day long come pilgrims who bathe their eyes and nostrils and throats and ears, in hope of a cure. On the right there is a marble pulpit. Beyond that the iron grille which protects the hillside is daily hung with fresh flowers which make a veritable solid floral wall along that side.

In the open space between the grotto and the gave are benches for the devout. The center of this space, and nearest the grotto, is reserved for the invalids who are brought here in chairs and on litters, at nearly all times of the day, for prayerful intercession. And thus the unfortunate are very near the shrine of their hopes, and their friends surround them and support them with their prayers. Few pilgrims avail themselves of the benches, for as a rule they kneel. The favored formula of prayer is the rosary, which they recite with their arms extended at full length on a level with their shoulders, which is said to have been the attitude of Bernadette in the presence of the apparitions.

At times during the day as many as a thousand persons may be seen on this sunlit pavement, between the little mountain torrent and the grotto, kneeling with their arms thus extended, their heads raised slightly, their

eyes fixed on the white and blue and gold figure in the rock. The rapt, intense expression of the upturned faces is less often adoration than petition, a silent intensive desperate petition. Sometimes the lips move, sometimes the words break out in half stifled whispers that will not be suppressed, sometimes even, though the voice is controlled, the tears are not, and from the over-full eyes they flow down pale cheeks and bronzed, and I have seen the sick in such an excess of spiritual fervor—prayer and hope, hope and prayer—that their attendants have wheeled or carried them away to break for a moment the overwhelming influence of the highly emotionalized situation.

The day in the domain begins early. During the period of the French National Pilgrimage there is, as indicated, scarcely any distinction between the activity of night and day. Usually, during the summer, which is long in this gracious southern climate, the daily number of pilgrims, I was told, averages about five thousand. Even at such a time the devout follow their priests into the church for a mass and communion long before the silver twilight of the early morning has been dissipated by the sun. There is something singularly peaceful and reassuring about this neutral hour which is no longer night, and is not yet day. Indistinct figures steal out of the gray shadows from many directions and pass into the church, with a velvet tread which does nothing to break the spectral silence. Within the church the great

dark spaces are broken up by patches of soft yellow flames where priests are muttering in half voice the ritual of the sacrifice for the little groups of faithful on their knees about the altars.

When the sun has climbed over the lower mountains east of the gave, the whole domain is already in action. It seemed impossible to reach the grotto too early to find petitioners there. The early trains have already begun to bring in the daily quota of travelers or the battalions of pilgrims distinguished by their badges. They sprinkle the Esplanade, often kneeling for a prayer at the Breton Calvary, the Paray le Monial group, or before the crowned Virgin of the Pyrenees. They climb the ramps and drift through the church. But mostly their first objective is the grotto, with curiosity to see the spot of whose miracles they have heard so much, and to send up for the sick one at home, the petition which all the way to Lourdes has been forming in their hearts.

The earliest concerted movement of the day is the first hour of the baths, usually about eleven o'clock. The members of the Hospitality have sought out their charges and now the invalid chairs follow each other in a long procession across the great circular pavement before the church and through the arches of the ramp to the shady place before the baths. Other members are waiting there, in every sense in harness, and, as the ambulances come with the bedridden, they lift them down and carry them into the enclosure. I observed that they,

too, often carried their rosaries, and thumbed the beads, even while they pushed the chairs or lifted the weighted litters.

The sick are generally a part of a pilgrimage. Their cure is often the object of the pilgrimage undertaken by an entire parish or town. Here under the trees, far from home, they find themselves comforted by the familiar faces of their parish priests and of their friends and family from their own village, be that in the neighboring Midi, or the far-away northern French plains, or in Spain, or Italy, or Switzerland, or England, or whereso-ever, near or far.

The baths are in a house built against the rock. While an invalid is within there surely reach him from outside the voices of his own people sending up invoca-tions for his cure. These invocations usually take the form of hymns and litanies. The priest leads and the fervor of the crowd frequently rises to dynamic inten-sity. Especially in the alternating appeal of the litanies, in the indefinite repetition of *"Ora pro nobis,"* or *"Priez pour nous,"* or "Pray for us," or the same for-mula in any language whatsoever, the voices seem to rise from an humble petition almost to the desperation of command, with a pounding persistency one surely hears nowhere else, and which it seems must drive itself through to the throne of mercy.

There is a dramatic intensity pervading the entire crowd. It is not alone the effect of the massed utter-

ance. It is particularly the knowledge of the hope, galvanized for the moment into belief and faith, in the hearts of every one about the closed door, and, even more intensively, in the hearts of the stricken ones who are in the act itself from which divine intervention is hoped. In repeated returns here at such a time I saw nothing approaching a cure, and it seemed as if the disappointment might well overwhelm the sick as they came out unhealed. But neither they nor the other pilgrims manifested any such effect. They seemed to draw on the same spiritual reserves for sustaining resignation as for their unquenchable hope that miraculous intervention might reach them the next time. And when you ask one of the devout why there is neither despair nor resentment, why even the seemingly inevitable and overwhelming disappointment is checked, the reply is almost uniformly: "It is not the will of God."

Reference is made above to the Bureau Medical. This is situated near the headquarters for the Hospitality, and here assembles the board of doctors who sit as jury upon the cases of pilgrims who claim to have been cured at Lourdes by a supernatural power. The official guide says: "More than a thousand doctors, of all nationalities, all schools and all religions succeed one another there each year with complete liberty. They examine and question the people who have been cured, demand and censure the witnesses and certificates and make personal inquiries at will. The Bureau publishes,

each year, a hundred or so of verbal examinations of the cures which have never been contested."

It was my privilege to attend a session of the Bureau of Authentication. There were present the physician presiding and a confrère, two physicians from Paris who had treated the claimant in her illness and came as witnesses, the claimant's mother and the claimant herself. She was a woman who, the year before, after an operation for peritonitis, her life having been despaired of by her physician, came to Lourdes, used the baths, and now said that she had been the object of a miracle in the complete restoration of her health. Incidentally, it was pointed out to me that "the authorities at Lourdes do not use the word 'miracle,' confining themselves to the pronouncement of a 'cure.' Only a canonical inquiry can pronounce a miracle. Such inquiries have announced less than thirty miracles at Lourdes among some four thousand authenticated cures since Bernadette's apparitions nearly seventy years ago." However, chemists have declared that the waters of the grotto have no scientifically therapeutic qualities and, it was also said, that the authorities never announce "a cure by the waters of Lourdes" except when a recovery is proved to have taken place and to have been attributable to no human or scientific ministration.

The parties to the conference sat about a long oval table and the investigation was carried on in a low voice, with the seriousness of a searching cross-examination,

which it was. The physicians from Paris had come prepared to declare that they had despaired of their patient's life and believed her case beyond the reach of medical science when she made the pilgrimage to Lourdes and returned in an improved condition, which later became a complete recovery, which had then lasted nearly a year. The presiding doctor analyzed the case in a series of questions, and then shook the certitude of one of the medical witnesses so that he would not repeat his affidavit that the recovery might not in any case have been an abnormally deferred result of the operation. The claim of a cure by the waters of Lourdes was not allowed. The claimant was visibly disappointed. It is no small thing to have believed one's self marked by supernatural favor, and probably so to have declared to a large parochial circle, and then to have official discredit cast on that belief from a source presumably most anxious to establish a record number of cures which can not be explained as of human intervention.

In the middle of the afternoon there is noticeably less movement within the domain. In the churches and before the grotto only are the devotional activities pursued. Then, a little before four o'clock, the place springs to life again. From all directions the crowds stream toward the grotto. A priest is there, with attendants, and, after hymns and prayers, he raises the brilliant monstrance containing the host and gives the "Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament." It is the preliminary to

another of the daily experiences at Lourdes and not the least moving.

A procession is formed. At the head is a crucifer and vested attendants. He is followed by the men of the pilgrimages at the time in Lourdes, grouped in their distinct units. There may be two or three thousand of these. Their line is made colorful by the scores of national flags and religious banners which they carry. Next come the ecclesiastics, priests and monks in their distinguishing habits and vestments, thurifers walking backward and offering incense in clouds to the "sacred species" borne aloft by the officiating priest, who walks under a white silk canopy and is attended by a deacon, a subdeacon and acolytes bearing lighted candles. Behind them walk the women of the pilgrimages, as numerous as the men in advance, they too bearing banners and flags. The procession proceeds, to the buzz of these thousands "saying the rosary" in unison of various groups. It creeps slowly down one side of the Esplanade and up the other.

Meantime there has been another but related activity. The sick and helpless have been brought by the hundreds from all directions, and their chairs and litters have been ranged side by side, in curved lines, paralleling the inner side of the great ramps before the church. The priest with the monstrance halts, under his canopy and surrounded by his attendants, at the end of the Esplanade. The pilgrims pass to the right and left and range themselves behind the rolling chairs and litters. Another

priest has advanced to the center of the great paved circle before the church and leads the entire throng in responsive recitation of the rosary. When the pilgrims have all assembled the priest with the monstrance, accompanied by all his attendants, makes a visit of solemn state to each chair and to each litter, pausing and raising the host above each of the afflicted and giving every single one an individual benediction. The faces of these helpless creatures is a study in reverence, faith and hope, as the ecclesiastical retinue approaches, and the gilded monstrance is held above him, and his eyes rest on the small white circle in which he sees "the body of his Lord."

The quiet of the night comes on only after another procession at the end of the twilight hour. It is a procession made fairy-like with thousands of shaded candles and almost gay with the singing of inspiring hymns. Or perhaps one imagines a comparative gaiety in relief from the emotional demand made by the presence of the sick who are not brought out at night. It is entirely of and for the laiety. Ecclesiastics participate by the hundred but they are lost in the ranks of their parishioners, and appear without vestment or attendant.

The pilgrims assemble near the grotto in the first twilight after sunset. As the carillon in the belfries rings the full strophe of the "Ave, Ave, Ave," the candles in the hands of these thousands spring into flame, out of the mass the procession somehow takes form and

The spires of the Cathedral of Bayonne, down the vista of the rue du Pont-Neuf

A game of *pelote*

moves with reverent deliberation on its way. Its course is up the curve of the ramp on the gave side, across the high terrace of the upper church, down the other ramp, along the length of one side of the Esplanade and up the other side. On each of several visits to Lourdes I found the pilgrims were so numerous that, even though they marched from four to eight abreast in close formation, the head of the procession had made the entire circuit of both ramps and both sides of the Esplanade before the end had ascended the first ramp. The broad line described a complete though irregular oval.

Imagine the evening quiet of this mountain valley broken by these thousands chanting their hymns, each group in its native language. Imagine the deepening twilight glowing with this ring of fire produced by the flames of thousands of candles. Imagine the head of this procession moving finally from side to side in long compact zigzag lines across the wide space between the ramps. Each turn advances the head only some fifteen feet nearer the church but each turn draws hundreds more into the enclosed space. At last all are assembled within the embrace of the ramps and for a moment more the dazzling effect of the massed moving candles continues. Then, at a signal, the singing legion halts, and turns silently toward the high façade of the church made mysterious by the combination of reflected light below and the enveloping darkness above, falls to its knees, and, in slow fervent unison, chants the Credo.

In the silence, following the great "Amen," every candle is snuffed. The crowd dissolves in the darkness. In another half hour the domain seems deserted. There is no light, but perhaps that of the unclouded moon and stars. There is no sound but the complaint of the torrent to its interrupting rocks. Roundabout the mountains bank black against the dark blue sky. In the silence and in the shadows, at the end of such a day, the loiterer there is left to his own reactions to such experiences.

CHAPTER XIV

The Basque Country

STEAMSHIP GEOGRAPHY—BASQUE COUNTRY—THE BASQUES—BAYONNE—ENJOYMENT OF A TOMB—PELOTE A CHISTERA—A CHAMPION OF THE WORLD—CAMBO AND ROSTAND—ST-JEAN AT THE FOOT OF THE PASS—IMPRISONED BY BASQUE BOYS—WHERE ROLAND FELL—CITY OF SARASATE—THE SILENT COAST—ST-JEAN-DE-LUZ AND BIARRITZ—WHERE THE PYRENEES END.

Many of the most interesting problems in geography have been furnished by a steamship company which in most instances gives its vessels the archaic names of seemingly remote and mysterious countries. The sense of humiliation in the face of one of the new, and at the same time old, names in the report of a launching is more than compensated for in the pleasurable feeling when suddenly and surprisingly one comes upon the same name in travel. That compensation comes from the feeling of security, and even superiority, one has when coming upon such a name in finding it familiar, even if that familiarity is based on a somewhat limited acquaintance with the who's who of transatlantic passenger ships. It was with such a pleasant sensation, when picking up acquaintance with the western end of the Pyrenees, in that angle between the Atlantic Ocean and the slight but

pretty River Adour, that I discovered it lay in a corner of what in ancient days was Aquitania.

Later this corner contributed to the formation of the old province of Gascony. To-day it is the Département of Basses-Pyrénées. But behind its present political name, which is correct in its description of the less rugged surface of this country, is its unofficial name which describes its equally interesting people. Here, and in even larger numbers over a wider territory across the line in Spain, dwell the Basques.

They reproduce at this west end of the range the detached racial unit manifested at the other end by the Catalans. But the Basques are even more distinctive in their dark, strong and vigorous physiques; in their antipathy to mingling with any other race; in their difficult language, which is unrelated to any other; and in their jealous tenacity of this language among themselves. In Spain, however, they speak Spanish so well that the Castillians claim them. And those in France usually speak French without the trace of an accent. Only two essential points divide the French and Spanish Basques: the political line drawn down the vanishing crest of the Pyrenees, and their *berets*. Even the shape and cloth of their *berets* are the same, but in France the color is dark blue and in Spain it is apt to be red.

They are an ancient people of an obscure ancestry, but they have maintained their type, their customs and their language with extraordinary firmness, in spite of

the varying political changes which have swept over them and divided them, and of political influences which have weakened and obliterated weaker peoples. On the south side of the mountains the Basques are called the Yankees of Spain. It is not so easy to make that distinction on the north side where the French nationally have been suspected of being the Yankees of Europe.

In balancing their resemblance to the French type and the Spanish, it seemed to me they favored the latter. But that may have only accentuated the fact, noticeable along the Pyrenees, that the Spanish type is frequently recognized on the French slopes, whereas one rarely sees a French type on the Spanish side. This is not a sign of French weakness, but on the contrary of French strength. The Spanish are attracted from home by the French climate, by the fertility of the well watered country, by more work, better pay and a higher standard of living here than on their side of the range. So, all the way from coast to coast, Spain seems pure and unadulterated Spanish, whereas there is a deep parallel margin of France where one sees the Spanish type and hears the Spanish language, either comparatively pure, or influencing the accent or form of the Catalan, French and Basque tongues.

These people answer to the name of Basque but in their own language and among their own people they are known as Euskualdunac. It is a significant word in its likeness to the people who so call themselves and to their

language—supple with vowels in difficult combinations but supported rigidly by bristling consonants; unsuggestive of any probable relation in the family of languages; a curious, inexplicable, unique survival.

In order to see the Basque at home, off his guard, one should avoid the centers and trail him up the mountain valleys of the Rivers Saison, Bidouze, Joyeuse, Nive and Bidassoa. My trips through these parts of the Pyrenees were generally made alone. They were based on Bayonne.

This city is the metropolis of the Basque country just as, at the other end of the range, the metropolis of the Catalan country is Perpignan. The analogy between the two little cities does not end here for both are of relatively the same size, both are at sea-level, both are near though not on the sea, and both are points of departure by train up the seaward facing valleys and down along their respective littorals into Spain. Apart from that, however, the similarity is less marked.

For all the effect upon its life Perpignan might as well be seventy as well as seven miles up the River Tet from the Mediterranean. Bayonne has a more practical opportunity with the larger River Adour and is a seaport in no small way. It is built about the junction of that river and the little River Nive. Bridges always decorate a town and Bayonne's beauty is much enhanced by its bridges. One can not walk many steps in any direction among its high houses without suddenly coming

out of the shadows of the seemingly narrow streets on to one of the bridges, with a vista of one river or the other. Unlike Venice as Bayonne may be, it is not without an occasional suggestion of the Adriatic city, and, if preemptory errands do not draw one back into the roofless tunnels, it is pleasant to visit the quays which line both sides of both rivers. It would be hard to say, after a stroll along the Allées Marines, what other city has a more ingratiating riverside.

A clean and proper little city is Bayonne, but its age shows through, as if it were a wigged and rouged old dandy living on half-pay in a suburban back-water. Though larger than Biarritz, it is eclipsed by this neighbor. The latter leads a gay and profligate young life on the seashore. Bayonne remains modestly inland, at a distance of merely two and a half miles from the ocean, but this distance is the difference between youth and age, brilliancy and drab, hectic dissipation and the stolid though solid movement of trade.

Being a seaport, of a kind, Bayonne gives itself a cosmopolitan touch, for those willing to observe, in the highly colored escutcheons here and there announcing the entrance to various consulates, and above them float the flags of the corresponding nationalities. Its treasures may be few but the gay municipal blade down on the seashore can not match them in kind. It offers them with quiet reticent dignity and they are worth the invitation.

The people who have enshrined so carefully its ad-

mirable collection of works of art left them by their celebrated townsman, the painter Leon Bonnat, seem indifferent to the shrine of its own historic memories. The walls and towers of the Château Vieux are worthy of a better setting than the clutter of hotels and cafés and modern buildings which submerge it. And so narrow is the street beyond, past the cathedral door, and so hemmed about is that monument, that one might pass it without a suspicion of the beauty within. This façade is truly typical of Bayonne. For the most part right and sound, it obtrudes a portico, quaint and once handsome, but now in the final and almost indistinguishable stages of decay. Even its great and graceful archway is filled with masonry to make a closed vestibule. One descends two groups of steps into the cathedral. There is something apologetic and deprecatory about a building which receives you at the foot of steps, just as there is the promise of grandeur in one which requires you to mount to attain it. This thirteenth century cathedral of Notre Dame is an exception. Through the door one steps down into a scene of lofty splendor. It is a fine specimen of Gothic on a slightly smaller scale than the greater cathedrals of Europe, yet thereby taking on an intimate grace and charm without sacrificing any of its dignity. It lacks the romantic quality of St-Bertrand-de-Comminges, but not anywhere in the Pyrenean country is there another Gothic edifice so large, so harmonious and so proper in its style as this one.

Be sure I hunted among the chapels for that stone whose inscription so amused Victor Hugo. It preserved the record that "the Royal Notary and the Messieurs of this chapter" gave "Pierre de Baraduc, burgess, and Man-at-arms in the old castle of the town, the title and possession of this tomb, in order that he and his may have the enjoyment thereof!" Changes and restorations have finally made this a tombless tombstone. Somewhere along the route of the years Pierre and his have been evicted from their "enjoyment."

There are more of these sculptured slabs in the cloister. They form the strange pattern that stones always do when they are snatched from their vigil-posts and are plastered into restored walls. The cool shaded walks here are a grateful haven on a sunny southern morning. The high pointed arches extend at angles the design of the cathedral. Intrinsically fine and obviously aged, they too repeat the aspect of the little city of which they are a part, so clean, so proper, and yet so undistinguished. The neighboring houses of a later day rise up about the cloister and eavesdrop on its privacy. Inside the square of arches they see only a well designed grass-plot, weathered and unkempt, and a few lonely palm trees which seem undetermined whether to continue prison life here, or to wither and die and be the mere ghosts and monuments of palms as they so nearly are now. The pleasantest aspect here is that from a corner arch which frames the whole cathedral, its gargoyles, its ethereal

flying buttresses, and its two spired and not unpleasing towers. These spires dominate almost any view of Bayonne. Seen out on the road to the mountains, across the little Nive, rising beyond the mossy bastions and the green luxurious trees, they give Bayonne the appearance of a little English city, somehow lost in this far corner of France.

It is, however, when it is seen up the quaint street between the Nive and the cathedral that the full majesty of the exterior of this noble pile is apparent. Seen thus, its towers white in the sunlight, against a blue sky, at the end but just above a narrow vista of dark old houses, it presents a picture that memory does not readily release.

Many things are forbidden on the walls of France, but on one of the side walls of the cathedral, near the Rue de l'Evêché, for the first time I saw in bold letters "*Défense peloter.*" One would not see this out of the Basque country, for the game of *pelote* is the passion of the Basques. It is played by old and young, in various ways and against every wall, even of their churches, when not prevented.

The sign reminded me of an evening at Pau when, leaning over the long balcony of the Boulevarde des Pyrénées, I chanced to look down into the lower town and for the first time saw the swift and expert players of the Basque game darting about in practise, the right hand *chistera*-shod, performing miracles of catching and throwing with the long curved wicker instrument which

is at once hand and bat in this fascinating game. It reminded me, too, that, if I would, I might next day see not only my first game of *Pelote Basque,* but the champion of Cuba on one side and, playing against him, for good measure, the champion of the world. And I did.

The game was played on the *Fronton de Brun* halfway between Bayonne and Biarritz. *Fronton* is French for the cement court on which *pelote* is played. This one seemed about three hundred feet long and sixty feet wide, with a cement end wall the width of the floor and about thirty feet high. It was wholly exposed to the weather. The *Fronton de Brun* is situated in a grove of trees, and the stands, made up of three terraced benches the length of each side, were well enough filled, yet I doubt if five hundred people were present. Of these, nearly all seemed foreigners, drawn from the cosmopolitan crowd at Biarritz. There were few natives in attendance. *Pelote* is in fact truly national with the Basques in the sense that their interest seems to lie more generally in playing than in watching the game.

At a match game there are three players on each side. They are bareheaded and wear white shirts, with the low open sport collars peculiar to the French, long white trousers, and the hemp-soled canvas shoes (*espadrilles*) worn throughout the Pyrenees. The players on one side always wear blue sashes, basque fashion, about their waists, and the sashes of their opponents are red. The *pelote,* or ball, is a trifle smaller than a tennis ball, but

it is made and covered like a baseball. The *chistera* is three feet of circular wicker open on one side, curved like a new moon, and terminates in a stout glove by which the player wears it and wields it.

The ball is bounced against the vertical wall and flies back toward the other end of the pavement. A player, first of one side and then of the other, catches the ball in his *chistera* and, continuing the motion, volleys the ball back against the wall for one of the players on the other side to catch and redeliver. The failure of one side to get the ball to the wall counts a point for the opponents. The side first scoring fifty points wins the game. A close game consumes nearly two hours.

The players are on their feet all the time. The action, with a very few interruptions, is incessant, the players racing backward and forward, from one end of the three-hundred-foot court to the other, snagging and returning the ball, by means of the old-fashioned wicker wheel-guard extension of their hands, with a precision and force that is astonishing. They make the ball rebound from the wall to the farther end of the court so far, and so swiftly, as to give the longest possible return for the opposition, thus to minimize the possibility of returning the ball to the wall, and wearing down the opponents' endurance. But nothing like the latter seems to happen. The game's demand on a *pelote*-player makes a baseball player's life seem comparatively a career of leisure. Not even a pitcher works so hard in nine full innings as

each of the six players in the game of *pelote à chistera.* A man who plays indoor squash or racquets, steadily for two hours, has a comparative idea of the rapidity, agility and endurance required, but none at all of what a pedometer would record on the person of a *pelote* player during an equal period. He seems to run miles.

There are brief interruptions, at least sometimes in a close game. They come whenever the score is tied, in the latter part of the game. There were brief pauses in the game I saw at the *Fronton de Brun.* The players retired to the side lines for refreshments, and the *Cantara* advanced to the center of the court. This person was scorer, umpire and announcer combined. He was a pleasant swarthy Basque, and wore white trousers, slippers, a pleated black silk coat, a sash, and a red *beret* with a red, white and blue tassel. He only needed a few daggers and blunderbusses, and a bad disposition, to have been the very model of a modern pirate. As it was he was the comic relief of the exhibition. His talent lay in his voice and an alleged gift for improvisation. I could not understand him but I was told that, like that of all *cantaras,* his song scrambled in lame rhythm and loose rhyme the facts that the terrible contest was a tie again, that he and the players were unspeakably grateful to the honorable audience for their attendance, and that every one would be poorer by the missing of the most thrilling contest ever played if they failed to attend the very next match, rhyming day, date and place, as he finished.

It has been said that the game of *pelote* played with the *chistera* is so exhausting that the career of a professional player is brief. Perhaps it is; but, if it is, then Chiquito de Cambo, the champion of the world, whom I saw that afternoon, was a super man. From his name I thought him some patrician of title. Resolved into the vernacular, however, it means that this player comes from the town of Cambo, up in the Pyrenees, and Chiquito isn't his real name at all. It is a nickname and is Basque for "little one" or "Cutie," much as we would call a player "Babe." Chiquito de Cambo became a champion when fourteen years old and he was physically *chiquito* at that time. He has been a professional player ever since, and knows no other livelihood than this game, which it is said wears out a professional in short order. Chiquito, when I saw him, was forty-two years old. On the opposite team was the champion of Cuba. The rivalry between them was such that in spite of the heat, in spite of their nearly equal ages, and in spite of the physical resources required during the two almost uninterrupted hours of play, these two erased their companion players, took nearly every play between them and made of it an exhibition as well as an endurance test the combination of which may have been equaled on some other occasion, or in some other kind of game, but I doubt it.

Though the mountains of the Basque country, as indicated by the name of the *département*, Basses-Pyrénées, are rather low and mild than high and formid-

able, there was, in my last ascent into the higher places, compensation for the absence of great peaks and extraordinary natural wonders, in being able to look forward to seeing a place consecrated to the memory of one of the most celebrated medieval knights of history or legend.

This neighborhood is up a valley which climbs diagonally from the ocean, much as the wilder higher valley of the Tet climbs from the Mediterranean. The road is not long closed in by low mountains when Cambo-les-Bains rises on its cushion of green trees. The baths of Cambo may be the keystone of its prosperity but they no longer support its fame. Its name has been carried around the world, at least that world which plays *pelote,* which is beyond seas in South America and Cuba, by the champion Chiquito de Cambo. It was given greater éclat when Arnaga, the fine villa which commands the approach, was built, and made his home, by the dramatic poet, Edmond Rostand. He was born in Marseilles but any one acquainted with his *Cyrano de Bergerac* knows his fervor for the people of this corner of France.

Arnaga reproduced the long low roof-lines of the typical Basque houses, solid square houses like the muscular Basque himself, and made picturesque by the overhanging eaves of the low wide roofs which spread over them like the wings of an eagle protecting its nest. Beneath such roofs one can believe exists the hospitality suggested by the Basque saying: "Who crosses this threshold enters his home."

The vast formal gardens of Arnaga are not, however, of these mountains, and they terminate in a mirror pool, before an elaborate pergola supported by open pavilions which seem somewhat Spanish and somewhat Italian. This impressive place is not a little suggestive of Rostand's poetry. In a large and varied setting of simple natural beauty it is consciously luxurious and ordered, both villa and park elaborately architected, not a detail of artificial beauty missing.

It is now owned and occupied by a rich Basque who sought and found his fortune in South America. Cambo and all the Basque country are extraordinarily proud of Rostand's connection with them and they exploit Arnaga to such an extent that it is already by way of becoming the chief magnet of the Nive Valley. Others who have bought historic homes elsewhere have later learned of their burdens and responsibilities. The owner of Arnaga may yet flee before the fame of Rostand, to a home without history, unknown, unsung, and especially unsought.

The road before and after Cambo mounts without effort, and for any one entering the Pyrenees for the first time interest would no doubt mount too. It is a smiling country with these first toy mountains behind the coast kept lusciously green by the damp salt winds from the ocean, but they are at most, according to the traveler's direction toward or away from the giant peaks, merely a promise or a souvenir.

Where the railway ends, farther up, is St-Jean-Pied-

de-Port, a little enough village for so long a name. Yet it is well named, for it nestles close at the foot of the road through the gate into Spain. The open place where the car halts is unpromising, but there are precious bits for a half hour's ramble.

The bridge spans the delicate rippling Nive at a point where both bridge and stream lead between overhanging old houses and make four vistas of almost equal picturesqueness. Penetrating a few feet into one of these vistas one stumbles into the fifteenth century church which seems a youngster among so many ancient toppling houses. It has the upper galleries of the Basque churches to which the men gallantly climb and leave the floor to their women folk. It has, too, a clock on a pillar just opposite the pulpit. It struck the hour while I was in the empty church, and I could not help believing it must be a comfort to the congregation, for its firm though gentle stroke has probably brought many a rambling sermon to a welcome end.

A steep climb up a winding street leads to the citadel. It is lined with rare old mansions, relics of the days when St-Jean-Pied-de-Port was the capital of Navarre, and some of the houses here bear aged inscriptions on the lintels. I am no great hand at old inscriptions, in enigmatic languages and lettering, even when they are not worn by several centuries of weather. But I fancied these to be some pleasant variation of that same popular saying which declares the Basque house to be the home

of whoever enters it. I went no farther here than an arch at the head of the street, but it framed a picture of the mountains where they are highest hereabout and of the depth of a valley, a picture whose charm again reminded that nature as draughtsman and colorist never disappoints.

On my way back an adventure. The old prison somewhere in this street promised interest. Unable to identify it, I asked a group of half a dozen boys, in black smocks, squat on a door-step, to tell me where it was. Three of them at once became my guides. The prison was, indeed, the next house to that before which the boys were sitting. Its low heavy old door swung formidably on what promised to be sufficiently rare. Its interior was dark and decayed, a corridor flanked with wretched cells, in each of which a patch of light no larger than a hand came reluctantly through an opening near the top. The boys followed, instead of leading, and had nothing at all to tell. Any house as old, and so long abandoned, should have furnished equal interest. It seemed a poor enough place to get into a guide-book, with the airs of an historical monument, and a good enough place for any one to get out of. When we reached the door, however, it was closed, and bolted from the outside. We were prisoners. The boys pounded, and yelled for help. But no one came. It was too dark to see the expression on the boys' faces. More noise finally brought the welcome clatter of somebody's mother. She threw back the clang-

ing bolt and released us. In the light the boys could not conceal the mischief in their eyes. Their companions had moved a little way up street, but they still betrayed a lively interest. Then I understood, and invested a few sous all around in terminating the episode, and received immediate returns in the thanks of these laughing and not a little self-conscious Basque youngsters. Doubtless they gather a tidy bit of spending-money making strangers prisoners in their old prison. After all a prison is for prisoners. I wondered if the woman was in the game.

The road crosses into Spain in crossing the Nive, five miles above St-Jean, at the village of Arnéguy. Simultaneously it entered the Val Carlos, whose name reminds again that this way the great Charles made his tragic retreat before the Moors. This gorge saw the annihilation of Charlemagne's rear-guard and it became the immortal theater of the death of the Paladin Roland.

The tradition of his feats have grown truly epic in these mountains. We have seen how, above Gavarnie, with his sword, he split the peak asunder to make way for his army. Just behind in the valley of the Nive we passed the Pas de Roland, an opening for the road, which the knight is reputed to have made with the thrust of his heel. Here on the pass they point to an enormous boulder which he threw at his charger when he slipped his footing on a dangerous curve. Yet this Roland actually lived, and was once of the stature of other men, and

fought here to make safe the retreat of the French king's hosts from Spain, and, after all others about him fell, here too he was slain.

Although retreating before the Moors, the annihilation of Charlemagne's army was due not to them, but to the Basques, who rolled boulders from the mountain-tops down upon them. When in 810, thirty-two years later, Louis le Débonnaire came this same way he saved his army from a similar fate by seizing the Basque women as hostages and bearing them with him until he was safely out of the mountains.

At the pass the road dips into a wooded valley in which nestles the village of Roncevalles (or Roncevaux), whose size is in rather inverse proportion to its fame. To-day it consists of only half a dozen houses, grouped about the half ruined convent which once ranked among the most celebrated sanctuaries in the Christian world. The pope extended it his direct protection. The prior held his office directly from the king of Spain. A prior and a few canons still reside in the remnant of the monastary, but its glory is all traditional now except for the few treasures which their custodian shows, for a coin or two.

An excellent road bore the car on twenty-five miles farther southwest down to Pampeluna, whose twenty-nine thousand inhabitants rate it the largest city on the Spanish slopes of this range. It sits pleasantly by the River Arga, in the midst of a rich valley still made addi-

St-Jean-Pied-de-Port on the River Nive

The Beach at Biarritz.
The Casino in the foreground and private villas beyond the rebuilt palace of the Empress Eugenie in the distance

tionally fertile by the canals built by the Moors. Its beginnings are lost in the remote past, but its name dates from Pompey, being a corruption of Pompeiopolis. Its ramparts still suggest the business for which they were built, but inside them the city sits as trim and proper as one can expect from such an ancient.

Nothing else in this attractive place compares in interest, however, with its cathedral. The fame of the riches of the Spanish churches leaves a small margin for surprise. Yet this enormous and truly splendid cathedral exceeds all expectations. It well deserves the epithet "a veritable museum," too freely bandied about when an old church is in question. Here choir-stalls, chapel-grilles, ornate altar retablos, royal tombs, profane no less than pious relics, statues and paintings by Spanish masters, and its charming cloister, create a memory that really crowns a visit.

There is another association in Pampeluna of quite recent origin, curiously recent for so old a town, and it will not fail to appeal to any one who loves music. Let him rest in the long square planted with trees and ornamented with monuments, and perhaps his eye will pick out presently the letters on the corner which proclaim this the Paseo de Sarasate. With such a hint, his suspicion that this was the home of that master violinist will be confirmed by any passer-by. Sarasate is not without other honors here in his home. In another street, whose name, Calle Héroes de Estella, is such a magnificent ges-

ture, is the Sarasate Museum, and in the large Paseo Taconera stands Sarasate's statue.

The last stage of the way carried across the Col de Maya to the ocean. It trailed again through a smiling landscape of miniature mountains, green fields and white villages, and the frontier always on the raised horizon on the right. The Maya Pass lifts the road to a panorama which seems to embrace everything at this end of the range. At the right were the mountains about Cambo, in the foreground was the gently rolling Basque plain with villages dotting it as far as Biarritz and Bayonne, on the left the last effort of the mountains to maintain their height as they dip into the ocean, and in the background two parallel bands of blue, one dark and one azure, the vast Atlantic and the vaster sky.

In half an hour all elevation trailed behind, the mountains had definitely disappeared, and we were on the beach at St-Jean-de-Luz. This seaside town has had a turbulent past, between the French and Spanish and English. It witnessed many armies pass along this most traveled highway between the Iberian Peninsula and the solid continent to the north, but its pleasantest memory is that of the June in 1660 when the Infanta Maria Teresa and the great Louis XIV met here, and he made her his bride and the Queen of France, in the little church in the street which, in these later days, at least, is called Gambetta. The door through which the royal procession passed has long been walled up, probably because a door-

way which had served so august a purpose might well be believed to have no further interest in life. The town clings, to the exclusion of all else, to the memory of this royal favor, by preserving a Place Louis XIV, a chateau Louis XIV, and the waterside Venetian-like House of the Infanta. Once St-Jean was three times its present size and in 1520 it sent its Basque sailors among the first to reach the new world. To-day it is a little brother of Biarritz where one finds an equally good beach but all the details of life repeated on a quieter and more modest scale.

The hard-pounding silver surf of the Gascon Gulf reminds one, all along the coastwise road to Biarritz, how well France has named this the Côte d'Argent. Before entering Biarritz the road rises to the edge of the Basque cliffs, which look down on the breakers from a last significant height, and then is engulfed by the gay streets of France's most petted watering-place.

Biarritz is newly rich, but at least it can boast that it rose by royal favor. The town was merely a prosperous fishing base until, in 1838, the Carlist troubles in Spain made San Sebastian uncomfortable, and drove certain Spaniards across the border to the French beach. Among them was one Eugénie de Montijo. This was the Eugénie who later fortunately became the empress of the French. Fortunately for Biarritz, at least, for so long as she retained her throne she kept her palace here. From that beginning nearly all the other royalties favored it

and its beach became one of the most fashionable rendezvous of all Europe. There is not probably another seaside that boasts so cosmopolitan a crowd. The environment is correspondingly fine and frivolous, sumptuous and sophisticated.

Here is the antithesis of all that we had seen before. By comparison Bayonne, Toulouse, Carcassonne and Perpignan seem drowsy discards of another age. The restless surf of the Atlantic emulates the restless crowds of the silver coast, and helps to heighten the contrast with the still waters of the Mediterranean and the simple unsophisticated Catalans of the Vermilion Coast in the shadow of Canigou. Along these warm sands, where the world is only in the dimension of length and breadth, one remembers, as in a dream, the pass of Puymorens, the glaciers of the central peaks, the cascades of Gavarnie and all those other heroic places where the world seemed on end.

THE END

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